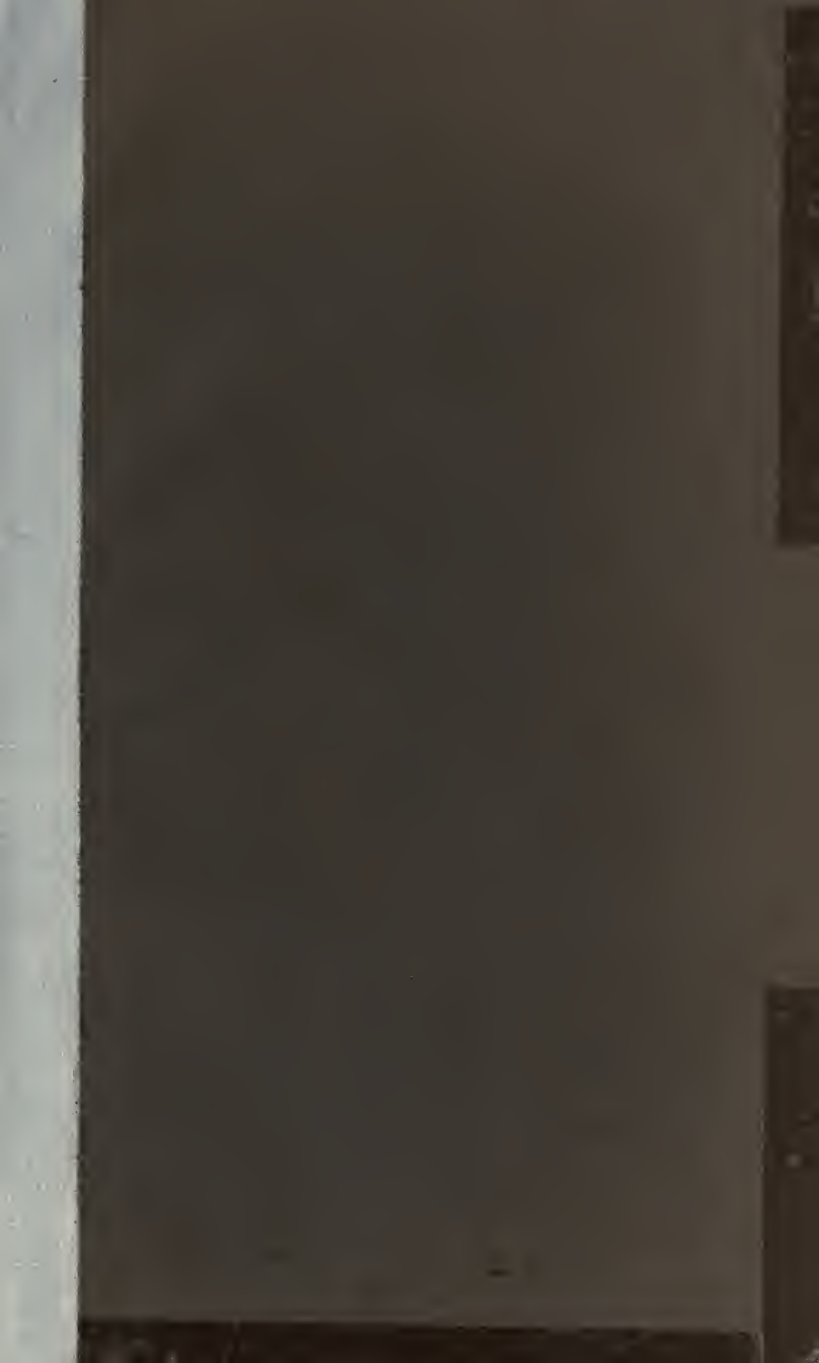

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W. E. Channing

MEMOIR

OF

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING,

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE
AND MANUSCRIPTS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

This work is an autobiography, in so far as the materials at my command have enabled me to give it that character, and consists of extracts from private papers, sermons, and letters, with such remarks only interwoven as seemed needed for purposes of illustration. Its plan is very simple. After a somewhat full and minute notice of Dr. Channing's early years, which will be found to present many interesting facts, and which no one hereafter could so well supply, I have proceeded to arrange the selections from his manuscripts according to the twofold order of Subject and of Time. This method was chosen as the one best fitted to convey an adequate impression of the steadiness with which he held all objects of thought before his mind, until his views became consistent and complete, and the growth of his opinions is in this way made clear, as well as the result of his progress. A thorough reader will consider any loss of vivacity in the narrative more than compensated for by the knowledge thus gained of the mental and moral processes of an earnest seeker after truth and right. The chapters which are especially devoted to tracing this spiritual

development, however, are so separated from the more general biographical parts, that any one who is inclined can pass them by. In giving such ample quotations from Dr. Channing's early writings I possibly have erred; but this was the only use that could be made of them under the directions which he left; and, in addition to the wish to aid others in forming a correct judgment of his life, I have been governed by the perhaps partial feeling, that the passages here printed were too good to be lost.

Courtesy seems to demand some explanation of the delay which has attended this publication; for I would not willingly appear to slight the just claims of Dr. Channing's friends in this country or Great Britain, and impatient hints from many quarters have reminded me that the public feel, surely with good reason, that they have a right to a nearer acquaintance with a man who has been a spiritual father to so many. When the duty of preparing this memoir fell upon me,—because no other person who knew my uncle so well could or would undertake it,—I at once saw that some years must be allowed to pass before attempting to speak of one with whom I had lived in such intimate relations. A certain measure of independence is requisite for a biographer, and the atmosphere of his spirit and genius had so surrounded me from boyhood, that I could not at once disengage myself from their charm. In the next place, urgent duties amidst religious and social movements, from which *he* would never have permitted me, on his account, to stand aloof, made such drafts upon time and power as to prevent the necessary con-

centration. And, finally, when a period of quiet seemed at last to be secured, prolonged and repeated illness came in to hinder the completion of my task.

Truth compels me to add, however, that dissatisfaction with my own work, and consequent efforts to remodel it, have been a chief source of apparent tardiness. It was my design to present a finished portrait of WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, regarded as a man, a minister of religion, a philosopher, a reformer, and a statesman, —to point out his place among the leading persons of the age,—and, by exhibiting his relations to various parties, to sketch his Life and Times. Extensive preparations were made accordingly. But experiment at length satisfied me, that it was far more difficult than I had supposed to shun the dishonesty of making my honoured relative the exponent of my prejudices, without sinking into a tone of non-committal yet more at variance with his character and with the truth. I have therefore preferred silence to partiality or tameness, have limited myself to brief hints and descriptions, have stated for his such opinions only as there could be no risk of my misapprehending or misrepresenting, and, in a word, have left him to be his own interpreter.

Such as it is, this Memoir is now offered to the world. It will be found rich in documents illustrative of Dr. Channing's inner and outward life; and this constitutes the essential value of a biography. I claim only to have been a conscientious editor. The sense of responsibility to many friends has made it wholly impossible to speak with the hearty unreserve with which it would have been pleasing to communicate

one's individual impressions of such a man; and in contrast with the ideal of what this work should be, the fragmentary notices here given seem meagre and dull indeed. I trust, however, that, through all obscurations, the bright original still shines forth.

W. H. C.

NOTE.

For reasons above stated, the editor of these papers has cancelled a sketch of the rise and progress of the "Unitarian Controversy," with which subject the third chapter in Part II. (Vol. I.) of this Memoir will be found to close. He had therein traced the three tendencies alluded to on page 259 from the middle of the last century down to the present time, taking Edwards and the Revivalists as an illustration of Spiritualism,—Chauncy and the Reformers as an illustration of Philanthropy,—Mayhew and the Rationalists as an illustration of Free Inquiry. It was his wish to show that these movements—the partisans of which have so seldom done each other justice—were really auxiliary in introducing the higher era of religious life to which all denominations are now welcomed. A prominent place of honour was awarded to the fathers of Liberal Christianity in New England, and chief among these to James Freeman, William Bentley, Aaron Bancroft, Nathaniel Thayer, and Henry Ware, sen. The powerful influence exerted by the Anthology Club, in awakening freedom of thought and a love of sound scholarship, was also distinctly shown. And, finally, the rightful position was assigned to the General Repository, as the advance-guard of Unitarianism proper.

In this sketch, the editor did not hesitate to express his own conviction, that the "Liberal Christians" committed an error, alike in principle and in policy, in allowing themselves

to be driven into the attitude of a sect. Even down to 1820, this band of brethren, differing in *opinion,* but united in *spirit* and in *action,* sometimes called themselves CATHOLIC Christians. The name was a grand one, and if they had adopted it, and been indeed governed by it, there can be but little doubt that Theological Science would have been farther advanced among us than it now is. For what one of the great questions at issue among believers has been scientifically solved by the controversies of the last half-century? And how can they be thus solved, until, by a universal reception of the Life of Love, we are brought into nearer communion with God, and are enabled by experience to know more of the Divine End in the destiny of Man upon Earth?

But the chief desire of the editor, in this note, is to call the attention of his brethren, of various denominations, to the urgent need which there is of at once collecting the materials for an Ecclesiastical History of New England and the United States. The stock of books, pamphlets, tracts, &c., as yet gathered in any of our large libraries is very imperfect, and quite valuable matter is rapidly disappearing, never to be replaced. For instance, correspondence has been destroyed, in cases where the void thus left cannot be supplied. He respectfully suggests, then, to his aged friends especially, alike among clergy and laity, in all cases to examine, sift, and select such letters, manuscripts, or pamphlets, as may be in their possession, tending to illustrate the progress of thought and of spiritual life in this country. He would further suggest that the libraries of the Theological Schools, of various denominations, would be a suitable place for depositing and registering such materials. For everything there is a place and a time; and some one may presently appear, who in a truly catholic and humane, as well as philosophic spirit, will feel prompted to show the relation of our fathers' worship, opinions, practice, to the popular character and intelligence, to the manners, institutions, and forms of society in our nation.

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MEMOIR.

PART FIRST.

Chap. I. — PARENTAGE AND BIRTH.

1780.

The island of Rhode Island—a brief sketch of whose scenery seems the befitting introduction to the memoir of a man formed so much under its influence, and who, late in life, and on a sacred occasion, said: "Amidst these scenes allow me to thank God that this beautiful island was the place of my birth,"*—lies at the south-eastern extremity of the State of Rhode Island. On the north, east, and west, it is surrounded by Narragansett bay, while its southern point is open to the sea. To a spectator upon the main-land or in a boat, it presents an image of singular serenity, with its gently graded surface sloping downward on every side from the central ridge,—its fresh green pastures and meadows dotted with high conical haystacks,—its harvest fields and orchard plots marked off by regular stone walls,—its farm-houses, weather-stained or white, with gardens and enclosures, scattered at intervals,—and its windmills waving their long arms upon the upper grounds. Its length is about fifteen miles, and a drive along the summit offers a succession of loveliest panoramas from Quaker hill on the north, where the Narragansett bay is seen spreading out its silvery sheet, sprinkled with islets and stretching far inland, to Miantonomoh hill at the south, which overlooks the spires and shipping of Newport, —and ocean spreading far beyond, with sails and gleams of sunshine or fog-banks on the horizon. The breadth of the prospects, the wide tracts of water, the ever-varying cloud-

* Works, Vol. IV., p. 337. Discourse at the Dedication of the Unitarian Congregational Church, Newport, 1836.

scenery and softness of the atmosphere, the reflected lights from bays and ocean, the looming up and vanishing of distant headlands, the shutting in and opening of curtains of mist, and the verdure kept bright by continual dampness, refresh the landscape with charms which every hour and season change. Along the shores are several glens, overhung with groves, where streams wear away the soil, and leave the naked rocks, and at whose mouths are pebbly margins, strewn with shells and sea-weed, offering pleasant walks and views across the water to the neighbouring coasts. At the south juts out a neck, upon whose crags and ledges the surf breaks, in calm weather even, with a glory of foam and spray, and in storms with awful magnificence. While further to the east extend beaches of three miles or more in length, lying broadly open to the Atlantic, where the green waves curl and dash with every tide, and across whose shelving sands, after a southern gale, the long rolling billows sweep with a roar that may be heard for many miles.

Newport, the chief town on the island, was, before the Revolution, quite a prosperous commercial capital, and after the war became the seat of government of the State of Rhode Island. It was, as it now is, a place of frequent resort for strangers, especially from the South, who came to pass there the summer months, attracted by the delightful climate, the ocean and rural scenery, the pleasures of sea-bathing, and the liberal, even luxurious, hospitality of the citizens. The presence of French and English officers during the revolutionary struggle gave new stimulants to the social tendencies of the inhabitants, and polished the already somewhat stately courtesy of their manners. Wealthy merchants, professional men established for eminence of talent in the then most important town of Rhode Island, successful sea-captains retired from service, and residents drawn thither by motives of health and enjoyment, formed a society not wanting in refinement, fond of pleasantry, and very cordial. A more than usual proportion of eccentric characters, also, gave, by quaint talk and extravagant ways, a dash of originality to the otherwise somewhat dull proprieties of the place. It is remembered, too, that, owing partly to the effect of French liberalism, partly to the licence of speech so common among seafaring men, profanity, at that period indeed a general vice, was in most classes habitual; and that, from the influence of the West India trade, as well as from the custom of the time,

intemperance abounded. On the other hand, exact attention was paid to sacred seasons and observances, somewhat of the old Puritanic sternness was inculcated as evidence of a godly spirit, and the prevalent tone of preaching was serious, perhaps even gloomy. The principles of free thought and speech, however, transmitted by the magnanimous and wise Roger Williams through the whole state of which he was founder, as well as by Mrs. Anne Hutchinson and Gov. Coddington, who with their friends first settled the island, and by Samuel Gorton and his followers,—the liberal temper everywhere engendered by the war for independence,—and the discussions awakened by the scepticism of the age, were hostile to bigotry in theological opinions, or to irksome restraints on conduct. If, finally, it is considered that the town was alive with the bustle of successful enterprise not then diverted into other channels, and that its citizens were warmly interested in the political controversies of the time, a sufficiently accurate notion may be formed of the moral atmosphere of Newport.

It was here, that, on the 7th of April, 1780, WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, the third child of WILLIAM CHANNING and LUCY ELLERY, was born.

His grand-parents, upon the father's and the mother's side alike, were persons of more than common energy, both in character and intelligence.

William Ellery, his mother's father, was a man of singular heartiness, honesty, good sense, and simplicity. "Graduated at Harvard College in 1747, he entered upon business as a merchant in his native town, Newport, which then offered every encouragement to an enterprising man, and was full of attractions to one of his social temper. He married, early in life, Ann, the daughter of Judge Remington, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, an excellent woman, prudent, affable, and hospitable, ever watchful over her children, and careful that her husband should find no place so agreeable to him as his home."*

An anecdote of their married life pleasantly shows the character of each, and the quality of their affection.

"It was Mr. Ellery's custom to spend his evenings with a

* Life of William Ellery. By Edward Tyrrel Channing. Spark's American Biography, Vol. VI., 1st Series.

party of young friends at some place of convivial resort; and it is enough to say of their amusements, that they were anything but intellectual, and just suited to make one's home the last place he would look to for his pleasures, and of course the very place where duty itself must soon become irksome. It was an essential part of domestic economy at that time for the matron to write upon the margin or blank leaves of her almanac any of the memorable occurrences in the daily experience of the household. One day, his wife had recorded as its most precious event, and with expressions of tenderness and gratitude, that her husband had passed the evening with her and her children. This, not many days after, fell under his eye, but he said not a word. If there was any upbraiding, it was all from his own heart. The same evening he returned to his usual haunt, and at once announced to his friends that he had come to take his parting cup with them, and that hereafter he should seek his evening pleasures at home. Some disbelieved, others scoffed; could this be true of a man of his gaiety and spirit? But their surprise and boisterous ridicule he was prepared for, and true to his purpose and word, he left them, and was ever after a thoroughly domestic man; and such was the effect of his resolution upon them, that in no long time the party was broken up and succeeded by pleasant meetings in each other's families.

"He often told this little incident as if it had deeply moved him. He had connected it indissolubly with a beloved wife, too early lost; and when he spoke of it, there was a tremulousness upon his lips, and a placidness of expression, which denoted his never-ceasing gratitude and love. Fifty years after her death, he says of her,—'You read, in the graveyard in Cambridge, the epitaph of your grandmother, a woman dear to me, and to all who were acquainted with her. Alas! I was too early deprived of her society.' She died in Cambridge, September 7, 1764, at the age of thirty-nine, and her husband returned to his home and children a sorely stricken and bowed-down man."

The following letter presents a spirited, though certainly not a flattered, sketch of Mr. Ellery, and of his life, from his own pen.

"Newport, January, 1796.

"If the year before I graduated I had determined upon law or physic, especially the latter, I am persuaded that I

should have led a more profitable and useful life than I have done; and I had a fine opportunity for either study. I could have studied the law under Judge Trowbridge, with whom I sometime boarded, or, if I had chosen the study of physic, my father would have placed me with a physician; but no one advised me, and I made no choice. I entered into small commerce without a spirit of enterprise or skill in trade; that would not do; I had married a wife, and could not submit to be an understrapper to a physician. I became a clerk of a court; there I copied writs and declarations, gained some knowledge of practice, and stood forth a dabbler, when, if I had, at the time I quitted college, gone into Mr. Trowbridge's office, I might have been a regular, well-instructed attorney, or, if I had studied physic, I might have been a skilful practitioner. I have been a clerk of a court, a quack lawyer, a member of congress, one of the lords of the admiralty, a judge, a loan officer, and finally a collector of the customs, and thus, not without many difficulties, but as honestly, thank God, as most men, I have got almost through the journey of a varied and sometimes anxious life."

"Mr. Ellery, though urging the young to keep to a single business, to love it, and find distinction in it, and though inclined in his own habits to steady, systematic application, was obliged to give up merchandise in the time of embarrassing revenue acts and non-importation agreements, when there was little or nothing for him to do but to join heart and hand, as he did, with the 'Sons of Liberty,' and in 1770 began the practice of the law. He was, as he says in a letter, a 'staunch friend to political liberty, and that liberty with which the Gospel has made us free.' And his sense of the worth of freedom could be the more relied on, as it did not spring from eager sympathy with the sudden excitements of the day, but from principles which his experience and reflection had prudently developed and confirmed. It was a deep-seated passion and a moral preference. To forward political liberty was, in his view, to follow every individual to his own heart and home with a blessing. According to his own strong language, he placed his obligations to uphold liberty as high as those which bound him to his wife and children. He had thus far held no political or judicial office; but he was known to the people for his firmness, judgment, and devotion to the public cause; had shown himself a public-hearted

man in the first struggles against encroachments upon the rights of the colonies; had been upon important committees, whose business was to procure the repeal of oppressive revenue acts; was acquainted with the active spirits who were preparing themselves and the people for a separation from the mother country; and had inspired a general confidence in his fitness for a high civil trust, let the aspect of affairs be ever so perplexing. Thus approved, he was chosen as delegate of Rhode Island in the memorable Congress of 1776, and with his venerable colleague, Stephen Hopkins, set his name to the Declaration of Independence.

"Mr. Ellery was in Congress from 1776 to 1786, with the exception of the years 1780 and 1782; and while there had universal confidence for his prudent, straightforward, practical view of affairs, and for his consistent, independent, decided conduct. Besides the respect which his abilities and character thus obtained, his social spirit and powers of conversation, his wit, pleasantry, and good-humoured satire, which could enliven a party of friends at their lodgings, or sweep away the fallacies and whims of members in a debate, brought him into delightful intimacy with leading men.

"His character bore the marks of habitual self-inspection and self-resistance. Humility was the virtue which he seemed to prize as the most comprehensive and productive. His effort was to bring every thought and desire into subjection before God, and to find security and motive in a fixed sense of his deficiencies and his obligations. This constant study of humility was his light and strength. It cleared and simplified the purpose of human life. It gave him more and more the command of his faculties, and the exercise of his affections, and the power of devoting himself to duty. It showed him on what false principles men are commonly pronounced great, and how monstrous are arrogance and oppression in a mortal. But this moral warfare never threw an air of constraint or austerity upon his intercourse with others. It seemed as if his spirits were kept elastic by his constant guard over them. His very kindness and gentleness had none of the inertness of mere good temper, but were animated by an active, cherished principle of love, which discriminated its objects, and was all alive for the happiness of another.

"In the pursuit of truth, he seemed more anxious for the certainty than the amount and variety of results. He was

not fond of indulging in conjectures, that he might fill the void where he had in vain looked for satisfying truth; nor was he unhappy because of the uncertainties which cannot be cleared up in an imperfect state of being. His feelings and wishes, and every extraneous or accidental circumstance, were as if they did not exist, in his sober-minded inquiry. Or rather, the very influences that are most apt to mislead did but sound the alarm to him to be single-hearted, and made his power of discerning the keener. He had the plainest common sense, and the most prudent judgment in common affairs; and not so much from having lived long in the world, as from his right temper of mind, and his habit of going far into the reason of things. This honesty or fairness of mind was his great distinction, and an explanation of his character. It was a proof of his moral and intellectual vigour. It was a religious principle. It ran through all his studies and experience, restraining him from injustice, and compelling him to condemn injustice; opening the way through ancient errors of whatever kind, and for the admission of light from whatever quarter; and making it absolutely impossible that he should be a partisan or idolater in anything.

"His kindness and warmth of affection were especially manifest in his intercourse with the young. A plain man, in years, living in retirement, and obtruding his opinions upon no one, he drew them to him as if he were their dependence; and they felt that they owed to him, not only some of their best remembered seasons of pleasure, but in no small degree the direction and colouring of their thoughts. When he saw anything to blame, he spoke plainly and earnestly, and suffered no weakness of affection to conceal or impair the force of what he thought it his duty to say. If they neglected his admonitions and disappointed his expectations, his regret was unmingled with selfishness, and his affection unabated. They might need it the more."

After leaving Congress, Mr. Ellery was for many years collector of the customs in Newport, where he lived to the age of ninety-three, beloved by a large circle of relatives and friends, and affectionately honoured by his fellow-citizens. He was remarkable, to the very close of his long life, for youthfulness of feeling, brightness of mind, and ready interest in nature, people, literature, events.

This sketch of the grandfather will be found to illustrate in no unimportant degree both the character and intellect of

his distinguished grandson; for William but recorded his own experience, when, after he had reached mature life, he wrote to Mr. Ellery,—"You have hardly a grandchild who cannot trace back some of his sentiments and principles to your instructive and condescending conversation."

John Channing, William's grandfather on the paternal side, was a respectable, and, till towards the close of life, a prosperous merchant of Newport. He was son of John Channing, of Dorsetshire, England,—the first of the name who came to America,—and of Mary Antram, who arrived together in Boston in 1712, and were soon after married. The wife of John Channing, jun., was Mary Chaloner (the widow of Dr. James Robinson, physician), whom the elderly people of Newport well remember for her energy of character and dignity of manner. They still describe her as sitting, of an afternoon, behind the counter of the small shop,—by means of which she supported her family in her widowhood,—dressed with great precision, busily knitting, and receiving her customers or visitors with an air of formal courtesy that awed the young, and commanded general respect. She was a high-spirited and ardent, yet religious and conscientious woman, and remarkable for activity and method.

William Channing, their second son, was born in Newport, June 11, 1751, and educated at Nassau Hall, Princeton College, New Jersey, where he graduated in 1769. He read law with Oliver Arnold, at Providence; in 1771, began the practice of his profession at Newport; in 1773, married Lucy Ellery, the daughter of William Ellery; in 1777, became attorney-general of his native state, and upon the adoption of the Federal Constitution, without any solicitation on his part, was appointed to the office of district attorney for the district of Rhode Island.

Hon. Asher Robbins, late member of the Senate of the United States from Rhode Island, writes of him thus :—

"Mr. Channing was very well read in the law, especially in the forms of pleading; law cases were his favourite reading, even for amusement. He had a large library, and one very well selected.

"He interested himself much in state politics, and his office was the central point of rendezvous, where the leading men congregated for their consultations.

"He was very popular in the State, was attorney-general and district attorney at the same time, and held both offices at the time of his death

"His manner of speaking at the bar was rapid, vehement, and impressive; never studied, nor exactly methodical in his pleadings; but he always came well prepared as to matter and authority. He had an extensive practice, attended all the courts regularly, and was considered, for several years before his death, as the leading counsel of the State.

"In person, he was of the middle stature, well made, erect, and of an open countenance; he was lively and pleasant in his conversation, and much disposed to social intercourse; he was hospitable and kind-hearted. His agreeable manner was one great source of his general popularity.

"In dress, he was not remarkable for any particular; it was always proper and becoming, though not an object of much attention with him; the colour was commonly black; indeed, I do not recollect ever to have seen him in any other.

"His temper was remarkably good, as were his manners, mild, liberal, generous; his habits were also correct, temperate, industrious, mindful and observant of all the duties and proprieties of life."

In addition, his father-in-law, Mr. Ellery, says of him:—

"He repeatedly served as a deputy for his native town; and such was his regard for its interests, that he did not decline that service, until, by the extensiveness of his practice, and the increase of his family, he was compelled to give to them his whole attention.

"He early became the head of a family. He married in the twenty-third year of his age, and performed the offices and charities of a husband and father with strict, constant, and tender attention, and was beloved and respected.

"The law of kindness and benevolence was in his heart and on his tongue. The persons employed by him as domestics, and in other services, he treated with great humanity, and rewarded with a liberal punctuality. He was an obedient and respectful son, and a most affectionate brother and friend. To the poor he was compassionate. The needy never went away from his house empty. His table and his purse were always open to their wants, and his munificence was ever accompanied with a sweetness in the manner, which doubled the obligations of gratitude.

"His religious sentiments were liberal. He was particularly attached to the congregational denomination of Christians, but he treated all good men of all denominations with

kindness and respect. He generously contributed to the support of Christian worship in the society to which he belonged, and countenanced and encouraged it by a constant and reverential attendance, and the ministers of religion experienced his hospitality.

"His political sentiments were displayed in a warm attachment to the rights of mankind, chastened by a love of peace and order.

"His countenance and deportment expressed the amiableness and benevolence of his disposition, and his morals corresponded with his manners. He was temperate and honest; he was courteous and respectful. As he keenly felt the distresses of mankind, so was he as strongly disposed to relieve their sufferings. He looked down with such pity on the poor and afflicted as encouraged them to look up to him for succour as to a brother."

These reminiscences of the father are confirmed and completed by the following beautiful notice, written in 1841, by his son William:*—

"Boston, December 18, 1841.

"My recollections of my father are imperfect, as he died when I was thirteen years of age, and I had been sent from home before that event. But the many testimonies which I have received to his eminence as a lawyer, as well as to his private virtues, make me desirous that there should be some memorial of him.

"My father retained much attachment to Princeton College, where he was educated, so that he thought of sending me there. He was the classmate and friend of Samuel S. Smith, afterwards distinguished as a theologian, and as the president of that institution. In the last part of his collegiate days he enjoyed the instructions of the celebrated Dr. Witherspoon.

"His early marriage and the rapid increase of his family obliged him to confine himself rigidly to his profession. He was too busy to give much time to general reading, or even to his family. Still, I have distinct impressions of his excellence in his social relations. He was the delight of the circle in which he moved. His mother, brothers, and sisters leaned on him as on no other. I well remember the benignity of his countenance and voice. At the same time he was a

* Memoirs of the Rhode Island Bar, by Wilkins Updike, Esq.

strict disciplinarian at home, and, according to the mistaken notions of that time, kept me at too great a distance from him. In truth, the prevalent notions of education were much more imperfect than in our day.

"I often went into courts, but was too young to understand my father's merits in the profession; yet I had always heard of him as standing at its head. My brother says that Judge Dawes used to speak of his style and manner as 'mellifluous;' but at times he was vehement, for I well recollect that I left the court-house in fear, at hearing him indignantly reply to what seemed to him unworthy language in the opposite counsel.

"His parents were religious, and the impressions made on his young mind were never lost. He was the main pillar of the religious society to which he belonged. The house of worship had suffered much from the occupation of Newport by the British army, so as to be unfit for use; and I recollect few things in my childhood more distinctly than his zeal in restoring it to its destination, and in settling a minister. I cannot doubt that his religious character received important aid from the ministry and friendship of Dr. Stiles, who was as eminent for piety as learning, and under whose teachings he grew up. He had a deep, I may say peculiar, abhorrence of the vice of profaneness; and such was his influence, that his large family of sons escaped this taint to a remarkable degree, though brought up in the midst of it. I recollect, with gratitude, the strong impression which he made on my own mind. I owed it to him, that, though living in the atmosphere of this vice, no profane word ever passed my lips.

"On one subject I think of his state of mind with sorrow. His father, like most respectable merchants of that place, possessed slaves imported from Africa. They were the domestics of the family; and my father had no sensibility to the evil. I remember, however, with pleasure, the affectionate relation which subsisted between him and the Africans (most of them aged) who continued to live with my grandfather. These were liberated after the Revolution; but nothing could remove them from their old home, where they rather ruled than served. One of the females used to speak of herself as the daughter of an African prince; and she certainly had much of the bearing of royalty. The dignity of her aspect and manner bespoke an uncommon woman. She was called

duchess, probably on account of the rank she had held in her own country. I knew her only after she was free, and had an establishment of her own. Now and then she invited all the children of the various families with which she was connected to a party, and we were liberally feasted under her hospitable roof. My father won the hearts of all his domestics. One of the sincerest mourners, at his death, was an excellent woman who had long lived with us, and whom he honoured for her piety.

"I recollect, distinctly, the great interest he took in the political questions which agitated the country. Though but eight or nine years of age, I was present when the Rhode Island Convention adopted the Federal Constitution; and the enthusiasm of that moment I can never forget. My father entered with his whole heart into that unbounded exultation. He was one of the most devoted members of the Federal party. At the beginning of the French Revolution, he shared in the universal hope and joy which it inspired; but I well recollect the sadness with which he talked to us, one Sunday afternoon, of the execution of Louis the Sixteenth; and from that moment his hopes died.

"You speak of the testimony borne to him by the late Elisha R. Potter, Esq. My father was among the first to discover the abilities of that remarkable man; and I remember the kindness with which he used to receive him. His spirit was, in truth, the kindest. He was ever ready to see and appreciate superior talents, and to attach himself to worth. His friendship seemed to me singularly strong for a man so immersed in business. Among his friends, were George Champlin, Esq., a politician of singular capacity, and who was said to have ruled the State for years without forfeiting his integrity; Dr. Isaac Senter, a physician of extensive practice, who was thought to unite with great experience a rare genius in his profession, and whose commanding figure rises before me at the distance of forty-five years, as a specimen of manly beauty worthy the chisel of a Grecian sculptor; and the Rev. Dr. Hitchcock, of Providence, a man of great sweetness of temper, and who deserves the grateful remembrance of that city for his zealous efforts in the cause of public education. My father took a great pleasure in the society of ministers, and always welcomed them to his hospitable dwelling.

"I remember his tastes with pleasure. He had two gar-

dens, one of them quite large, and as he sought to have everything which he cultivated of the best kind, our table, otherwise simple, was, in this respect, luxurious. He was not satisfied with what contented his neighbours, but introduced new varieties of vegetables into the town. He also took great interest in sacred music. On Sunday evening, the choir of the congregation, which included most of the younger members, and other amateurs, met in his office for practice in singing. The apartment, somewhat spacious, was filled; and the animation of the meeting, to which his zeal contributed not a little, made the occasion one of my weekly pleasures.

"As far as I can trust my recollections of my father's person, it must have been very prepossessing; but to me his appearance, at the time, was more venerable than beautiful. His head was bald, and his cocked hat, and the other parts of his dress, which, according to the fashions of the day, differed much from the costume of the young, made him seem from the first an old man.

"He prospered in life, but without being able to leave a competence to his large family. His labours were great, but I have no recollection of seeing him depressed. I should place him among the happy. He was taken away in the midst of usefulness and hope. The disease of which he died was not understood. I remember that he used to complain of feelings which we now should consider as dyspepsia; but that disease was little thought of then, and the name never heard.

"These are very scanty reminiscences; but as I hardly saw my father after reaching my twelfth year, and as nearly fifty years have passed since that time, it is not to be wondered at that I can recall no more of his calm, uniform life. The career of a professional man, occupied with the support of a large family, offers no great events.

"I little thought, when I began, of writing so much; but the pleasure which all men take in the virtues of parents has led me on insensibly.

"My father died before I could requite him for his toils for my support and his interest in my moral well-being; and I feel as if, in this present instance, I was discharging some part, though a very small one, of my great debt. I owed him much, and it is not my smallest obligation that his character enables me to join affectionate esteem and reverence with my instinctive gratitude.

"Very truly yours, W. E. Channing."

Lucy Ellery, William's mother, resembled her father in energy, judgment, practical skill, and integrity. But she added to these traits a tenderness of sensibility and a deep enthusiasm, which threw a charm of romance over her conduct and conversation. She was small in person, but erect in bearing and elastic in movement; and strongly marked features, with a singularly bright and penetrating eye, gave her an air of self-reliance and command. Her manner was generally benignant, often tenderly affectionate, and marked by the dignified courtesy of the old school; but if pretension and fraud, in any of their manifold disguises, crossed her path, she became chillingly reserved and blunt to the verge of severity. Her feelings were quick, her humour was lively, and so did she clothe sagacious thoughts in quaint dialect, that she was as entertaining a companion as she was a wise counsellor. The whole tone of her mind and temper was original; blending, in a rare union, shrewdness and sympathy, caution and fresh impulse, devoted generosity and strict conscience, stern straightforwardness and cordial love. In a word, there was a rough nobleness in her ways, which irresistibly won affection and respect, and made her influence powerful for good on all within her sphere. The following sketch, by her son William, may best introduce her.

"The most remarkable trait in my mother's character was the rectitude and simplicity of her mind. Perhaps I have never known her equal in this respect. She was true in thought, word, and life. She had the firmness to see the truth, to speak it, to act upon it. She was direct in judgment and conversation, and in my long intercourse with her I cannot recall one word or action betraying the slightest insincerity. She had keen insight into character. She was not to be imposed upon by others, and, what is rarer, she practised no imposition on her own mind. She saw things, persons, events, as they were, and spoke of them by their right names. Her partialities did not blind her, even to her children. Her love was without illusion. She recognised unerringly, and with delight, fairness, honesty, genuine uprightness, and shrunk as by instinct from everything specious, the factitious in character, and plausible manners."

Born of parents thus rich in natural gifts, and well trained, William inherited a physical organization at once delicate and vigorous, and tendencies of heart and mind in which the virtues of both were most happily balanced. He is remem-

bered as having been an infant of rare loveliness, and was from the first an idol. Such prophetic affection tends naturally to bring the fulfilment of its hopes; and certainly, in the present instance, the expectant trust of the mother was an exhaustless incentive to the son. She lived for more than fifty years after his birth, and their relation throughout this long, and for the most part unbroken, period of intercourse was as beautiful as it was rich in mutual blessing.

Chap. II.—BOYHOOD.

æt. 1–14. 1780–1794.

The earliest description given of William is from an aged relative, who says,—"I remember him as a boy three or four years old, with brilliant eyes, glowing cheeks, and light-brown hair falling in curls upon his shoulders, dressed in a green velvet jacket, with ruffled collar and white under-clothes, standing by his mother's side on the seat of the pew, and looking round upon the congregation. I thought him the most splendid child I ever saw." Allowance must of course be made in our estimate of such a sketch, for any reflected brightness which success in after life may have thrown upon the memory. But all testimony confirms this impression of the beaming beauty of William's childhood; and to those who have associations only with the wasted form, thin features, and sunken eyes of the preacher, whose spirit seemed about to cast aside the body, this picture of the blooming boy will not be without the charm, at least, of contrast.

Owing to his mother's poor state of health, the children were early placed at school, and William was sent when yet so young that he was often carried in the arms of a coloured man. One of his first recollections was of being taken to the school-room one morning after the good mistress had died. The stillness which prevailed in place of the usual bustle, the slow steps, the hushed voices, and the sight of the dead body, left a feeling of awe so strong that he vividly recalled the scene in the very last year of his life.

He next was subjected to the discipline of a most rigid dame, who used to enforce order by means of a long pole,

like a fishing-rod,—with which she could reach every corner of the room. Of this chapter in his experience, he wrote, many years afterward, the following humorous account:—

"I was a little amused with the objection which you say the ——s made to your proposed school, that you want those essential qualifications of a teacher,—gray hairs and spectacles. This objection brought back to my mind the venerable schoolmistress under whose care my infant faculties were unfolded. She, indeed, would have suited the ——s to a hair. Her nose was peculiarly privileged and honoured, for it bore *two* spectacles. The locks which strayed from her close mob-cap were most evidently the growth of other times. She sat in a large easy-chair, and, unlike the insect forms of modern days, she filled the capacious seat. Her title was *Madam*, a title which she exclusively enjoyed. When we entered her door we kissed our hands, and Madam was the first word which escaped our lips. But I would not have you suppose that there was nothing but a title, and spectacles, and gray locks to insure our respect. Madam was wiser than the ——s. She did not trust chiefly to age. On the right arm of her easy-chair there reclined what to common eyes appeared only a long round stick; but so piercing was its vision, so quick its hearing, so rapid its motions, so suddenly did it reach the whispering or idle delinquent, that Ovid, had he known it, would have been strongly tempted to trace it, by many a strange metamorphosis, back to Argus, or some other watchful, sleepless being of ancient mythology. We, trembling wights, were satisfied with feeling, and had no curiosity to explore its hidden properties. Do you ask where this mysterious wand is to be found? I fear it is irrecoverably lost. The storm of revolution, which has so lately passed over us, not contented with breaking the sceptres and hurling down the thrones of monarchs, burst into the school-room, and Madam's title and rod were swept away in the general desolation."

From this guardian of decorum, he passed into the keeping of two excellent women and good teachers, under whose care he improved rapidly, and with whom he was so much of a favourite as to be constantly set up as a model for the other children's imitation. The regard in which he was held by his young companions, also, was pleasantly shown by an answer given to the mistress, when, one day, as usual, she said to an unruly urchin,—"I wish in my heart you were

like William Channing." "Oh," exclaimed the poor child, "I can't be like him; it is not half so hard for him to be good as it is for me."

As he grew older, William was advanced to the boarding and day school of Mr. Rogers, which was considered the best in the town, and indeed had so high a reputation, that boys from a distance, especially from the South, were sent to his charge. It was the habit of that time to use flogging as the common penalty, and no master would then have responded, as all good ones must now do, to the words of Vogel,—"When we teachers become fully competent to our work, the necessity of corporeal punishment will cease altogether."* This is mentioned, because it is certain that what he then experienced outraged his sensitive honour, and served to arouse the feeling of indignation against any form of violence used towards children, which grew so strong in him in later years. He would often tell an anecdote of a little boy in school trying to shield with his arms a larger one, whom the master was about to whip. The contrast of the great heart with the small physical power, the noble position of the young remonstrant against tyranny, produced an indelible impression upon his childish imagination, and made the severity of the teacher and the quarrelling of the children detestable and hideous. He had through life an utter contempt and horror for every arbitrary infliction of bodily pain; and once, when conversing with a person who advocated the use of the lash in the army, navy, and prisons, broke forth with—"What! strike a *man!*" with such a thrilling tone, that it completely overwhelmed his hearer, and awakened in him an entirely new sense of the dignity of a human being.

In connexion with this degradation of boys by whipping, he sometimes remarked that his first feeling of the sacredness of woman was called out by observing that the delicate hands of the girls at school were never marked by the ferule. But, indeed, this early sentiment of reverence for women was probably owing to his lively sensibility to female loveliness. For once, while gazing on a child, as she danced playfully round him, he said, with a tone of deep tenderness,—"She brings so to mind the days when her mother, then a gay little girl, used with her companions to creep from the school-room unnoticed by the master, and I, looking out of the window,

* Hon. H. Mann's Seventh Report, as Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education.

would watch her as she skipped down the street, and with boastful gesture mocked the boys who could not follow. She seemed, with her hair floating on her shoulders, as she lightly moved, so very beautiful. I have a clearer notion of the bliss of a seraph in heaven now than I had then, of the joyous spirit which buoyed up that form."

As a pupil, it is said that William was patient and diligent, but not remarkable for quickness of perception. He rather examined carefully the subject offered to his attention, listening to his teacher, till satisfied that he thoroughly understood his meaning, than comprehended it at once by rapid insight. Indeed, like many men, afterward distinguished for intellectual power, he was thought dull; and the story runs, that he found the difficulties in acquiring Latin to be insurmountable, until an assistant in his father's office, taking pity on the plodding boy, said one evening,—"Come, Bill! they say you are a fool, but I know better. Bring me your grammar, and I'll soon teach you Latin." But having thus taken the first step by aid of his judicious friend, his progress was so rapid that he early became distinguished for classical attainments. In a letter to a young friend, he alludes to the delight with which he first read Virgil, and he often referred to his boyish pleasure in this class of studies. For mathematics, also, he showed both aptitude and fondness, and he retained through life quite uncommon quickness and accuracy in the combination of numbers, though his subsequent pursuits were little fitted to develop this latent taste. Considerateness, reflection, thoroughness, rather than brilliancy, originality, or force, seem to have been his mental manifestations at school. But so much depends upon the skill of the teacher, upon penetration to detect, and readiness of sympathy to foster, the peculiar genius of a child, that but small reliance can be placed upon such indications as he then gave of his intellectual biases. All that is actually known is, that he gained the respect of his instructors, held a high rank among his fellows, and awakened the warm hopes of his friends; for, in a letter written towards the close of his school days, his father, using the stately style of expressing affection then common, says to him,—"We expect much from our son William, and flatter ourselves that we shall not be disappointed."

Of the more important education which William received from the influences of home and of society, he has himself given a graphic, though slight sketch, in the letter descriptive

of his father. But it may be well to dwell on these influences for a moment, as they did much to give direction to his moral energies. His father's dignified reserve towards his children has been noticed with regret by the son; but still the pervading sweetness of his manner must have captivated them, and won their confidence, for, by universal report, his presence was like a sunbeam,—so did cheerfulness, serenity, good humour, pleasantry, kind regard for others' rights and feelings, and assiduity to please, surround him with an atmosphere of love. The mother was not of a tranquil temperament; but the father, in the gentlest tone, would soothe her when disturbed by household perplexities, or by the children's tumult, saying, "Do not trouble yourself, Lucy; I will make all smooth." They who were ever under the charm of Dr. Channing's blandness, may readily conceive how much in early life he had been affected by his father's beautiful domestic character. And from the mother's scrupulous thoroughness he no less derived practical habits of the highest use. She was the boys' overseer in the care of the garden, when, as they grew strong enough, they were intrusted with tools; and she was a judge difficult to please. If the seeds were well planted, the beds kept clean, the paths swept, they had kind words and reward; but if they slighted their task, they must go hungry. In the plain but expressive phrase of our farmers, she would have no "shirking." She kept a close watch that her children should not fall into danger or mischief, and was in all respects exact. Among other restrictions, one may be mentioned, as illustrating at once her caution and William's conscientiousness. She forbade the boys from bathing in the sea without the protection of some grown person. Of course, the temptation constantly presented by the neighbourhood of the water, the facilities offered by the beach and boats at the wharf, and the example of those of their own age, proved often too strong; and then, if, after efforts to dry their hair by rubbing and basking in the sun, the ends were found wet, off went the jacket, and a brisk application of the rod followed. But while his brothers disregarded this unreasonable restraint, as to them it seemed, and became good swimmers, William, though as eager for sport, and as fearless as they, used to walk quietly home, alone. He through life regretted that filial respect had demanded the sacrifice of so manly and useful an accomplishment. The mother was a person overflowing with generosity, though at

the same time she was frugal from the sense of her parental responsibilities; and the children, left to the charge of a strict domestic, thought their fare sometimes scanty; but William, it is remembered, was grateful and contented. In relation to this point, he once said,—"When I was young, the luxury of eating was carried to the greatest excess in Newport. My first notion, indeed, of glory, was attached to an old black cook, whom I saw to be the most important personage in town. He belonged to the household of my uncle, and was in great demand wherever there was to be a dinner." The extreme simplicity of his own after habits may have been, in a measure, owing to the disgust which he thus early felt for self-indulgence, and to the plainness of living to which he was accustomed at home. While thus over-cautious, however, the good mother was still genuinely affectionate, and faithfully supplied, according to her ability, the absence of paternal guidance; for the father was for the most part too busy in his multifarious duties to be able to pay much heed to his family.

But though so little under the direct influence of his father's character, William's principles were yet permanently fashioned by his example. From him, and from his grandfather, and their conversations on public questions, at the critical period when our nation was settling into order after the upheaval of the Revolution, and when Europe was shaken from end to end by the first waves of the grand social earthquake, he doubtless derived that spirit of patriotism and interest in political movements by which he was afterwards characterized. His father, as a leading lawyer, and an earnest supporter of the Federal party, necessarily received at his house various eminent men who visited Newport. Washington dined there when on his northern tour; and it can be readily understood how much a boy's enthusiasm, already fervent from hearing him always spoken of in terms of honour, was heightened by thus seeing the Father of the Nation face to face. Jay, too, and other men remarkable for political, professional, and literary talent, were there, waking by their presence generous ambition. And by Dr. Stiles, once pastor in Newport, and afterwards President of Yale College, William was so moved, that late in life he used in relation to him this strong language:—"To the influence of this distinguished man in the circle in which I was brought up, I may owe in part the indignation which I feel towards every invasion of human

rights. In my earliest years I regarded no human being with equal reverence. I have his form before me at this moment almost as distinctly as if I had seen him yesterday, so strong is the impression made on a child through the moral affections."*

While thus in an atmosphere of freedom, tempered by respect for order, the traits were developed which made him in manhood a patriot and philanthropist; yet deeper influences were unfolding William's spiritual affections. He seems from the first to have shown a bent towards the pursuit that occupied his mature years, and early earned the title of "Little Minister." When yet very small, he was wont to arrange a room with seats and desk, and to summon the family, with blows upon the warming-pan by way of a bell, to a religious meeting, where he preached with much seriousness and energy. At other times, he would assemble his playmates for a similar purpose upon the steps of the door. This development of religious sensibility may have been owing in a measure to the influence of an aunt of his father's, who was an invalid, and a woman of much piety and sweetness, to whose room the nephews and nieces went on a Sunday afternoon to read in the Bible or some good book, repeat hymns, and join in a simple prayer. At home, too, his mother was accustomed to call the children together in the best parlour, which was open only once a week, or on great occasions, and to read with them from the Scriptures. With the then prevalent views of deference due to parents, she exacted at these times a decorum which the younger ones found it difficult to keep; for the large room, in winter days, was cold, and they shivered in their seats; and as the wind found its way through the crannies and swelled the carpet, the house-dog would, to their great amusement, chase the waves across the floor. William, however, was always sedate. He was influenced, too, not a little, by a respected confidential servant, Rachel De Gilder, a woman of masculine energy, kind, though firm, and of strong religious principle, who exerted a sway over the children second only to their mother's, and to whom William felt a gratitude so warm that he befriended her through a long life. Rachel was a Baptist, converted and instructed by Mr. Eddy, of Newport, who was afterward known to have been a Unitarian. Her views were uncom-

* Discourse at the Dedication of the Unitarian Congregational Church, Newport, 1836. Works, Vol. IV., p. 341.

monly cheerful; and it would be interesting to learn how far suggestive words, dropped by her in conversation, became germs in the boy's receptive heart, which ripened into the theology of his manhood.

While a spiritual life was thus taking root, and putting forth its first branches, his reason was also directed to doctrinal speculations. His grandfather Ellery was a diligent student of ecclesiastical history and of dogmatic divinity, and liked much to converse with perfect freedom upon disputed points of faith. This must of course have had its effect upon an intelligent boy like William, and he once alluded to it, saying,—"When but a mere child, I was quite a theologian, though I hated to hear my elders chop logic, according to the fashion of that controversial time." In relation to this period, he has also said,—"I can distinctly recollect unhappy influences exerted on my youthful mind by the general tone of religion in this town,"—referring at once to the dry technical teaching which he heard from the pulpit, or the dull drilling which the children weekly underwent from the Assembly's Catechism on the one side, and on the other, to the profanity and jeers of infidelity which reached him in the street.

Many elevating influences, however, were around him, to which he has thus borne grateful testimony:—

"I can well remember how the name of Dr. Stiles was cherished among his parishioners, after years of separation. His visit to this place was to many a festival. When little more than a child, I was present at some of his private meetings with the more religious part of his former congregation, and I recollect how I was moved by the tears and expressive looks with which his affectionate exhortations were received. In his faith, he was what was called a moderate Calvinist; but his heart was of no sect. He carried into his religion the spirit of liberty, which then stirred the whole country. Intolerance, church tyranny, in all its forms, he abhorred. He respected the right of private judgment, where others would have thought themselves authorized to restrain it. A young man, to whom he had been as a father, one day communicated to him doubts concerning the Trinity. He expressed his sorrow, but mildly, and with undiminished affection, told him to go to the Scriptures, and to seek his faith there and only there. His friendships were confined to no parties. He desired to heal the wounds of the divided church

of Christ, not by a common creed, but by the spirit of love. He wished to break every yoke, civil and ecclesiastical."

Of Dr. Hopkins, also, whom he used to hear preach, as well as often to meet at his father's table, and of whom ample mention will be made hereafter, he has left recollections full of affectionate respect. It was from him that he first gained his convictions of the iniquity of slavery; for this was a subject on which Dr. Hopkins, without heeding the strong prejudices and passions enlisted on the side of wrong, bore faithful testimony from the press and the pulpit, while at the same time he laboured for the education of the coloured people with energy and success.

"My recollections of Dr. Hopkins," he writes, "go back to my earliest years. As the second congregational church was closed in my childhood, in consequence of Dr. Stiles's removal to New Haven, my father was accustomed to attend on the ministry of Dr. Hopkins. Perhaps he was the first minister I heard, but I heard him with no profit. His manner, which was singularly unattractive, could not win a child's attention; and the circumstances attending the service were repulsive. The church had been much injured by the British during their occupation of the town, and the congregation were too poor to repair it. It had a desolate look, and in winter the rattling of the windows made an impression which time has not worn out. It was literally 'as cold as a barn,' and some of the most painful sensations of my childhood were experienced in that comfortless building. As I grew up, I was accustomed to attend worship in our own church, where Dr. Patten was settled, so that for years I knew little of Dr. Hopkins. My first impressions were not very favourable. I think it probable that his strong reprobation of the slave-trade excited ill-will in the place, and I can distinctly recollect that the prevalence of terror in his preaching was a very common subject of remark, and gave rise to ludicrous stories among the boys."*

It was at this period, too, that he received lessons, never to be forgotten, on the virtue of temperance, from a Baptist minister, called Father Thurston. This worthy man gave striking evidence of his zeal for reforming the vice of drunkenness, at a time when all classes of society there, as elsewhere, were debased by it, and when the citizens of Newport were

* Works, Vol. IV., p. 341.

largely engaged in the manufacture and traffic in ardent spirits. He was very poor, and eked out a scanty support, in addition to a small ministerial salary, by working during the week as a cooper. But though hogsheads and barrels were the articles most in demand for the West India trade, the old gentleman would make nothing but pails.

The most significant anecdote to illustrate the religious impressions made upon his mind in childhood is one thus related by himself. His father, with the view of giving him a ride, took William in his chaise one day, as he was going to hear a famous preacher in the neighbourhood. Impressed with the notion that he might learn glad tidings from the unseen world, he listened attentively to the sermon. With very glowing rhetoric, the lost state of man was described, his abandonment to evil, helplessness, dependence upon sovereign grace, and the need of earnest prayer as the condition of receiving this divine aid. In the view of the speaker, a curse seemed to rest upon the earth, and darkness and horror to veil the face of nature. William, for his part, supposed that henceforth those who believed would abandon all other things to seek this salvation, and that amusement and earthly business would no longer occupy a moment. The service over, they went out of the church, and his father, in answer to the remark of some person, said, with a decisive tone,— "Sound doctrine, Sir." "It is all *true* then," was his inward reflection. A heavy weight fell on his heart. He wanted to speak to his father; he expected his father would speak to him in relation to this tremendous crisis of things. They got into the chaise and rode along, but, absorbed in awful thoughts, he could not raise his voice. Presently his father began to whistle! At length they reached home; but instead of calling the family together, and telling them of the appalling intelligence which the preacher had given, his father took off his boots, put his feet toward the fireplace, and quietly read a newspaper. All things went on as usual. At first, he was surprised; but not being given to talking, he asked no explanations. Soon, however, the question rose,— "Could what he had heard be true? No! his father did not believe it; people did not believe it! It was *not* true!" He felt that he had been trifled with; that the preacher had deceived him; and from that time he became inclined to distrust everything oratorical, and to measure exactly the meaning of

words; he had received a profound lesson on the worth of sincerity.

External aids were useful, however, in unfolding William's religious nature, only because this was so rich in high, generous, conscientious feeling. He was remarkable, from the first, for purity and self-command, and for an air of dignity, which abashed the frivolousness of rude companions, and guarded him from the familiarities of less delicate spirits. And it was well that conscience was thus early quickened, and that this mantle of modesty was wrapped about him; for, to use his own words, there was then "a corruption of morals among those of my own age, which made boyhood a critical and perilous season."

In disposition, William was for the most part grave and reflective. He was fond of lonely rambles on the beach; liked to go apart into some beautiful scene, with no other playmate than his kite, which he delighted in flying; indulged in reverie and contemplation, and according to his own statement, owed the tone of his character more to the influences of solitary thought than of companionship. Indeed, he often said that he understood the happiness of childhood rather from observation than experience, that his early life was sad, that conscious want of virtue and knowledge then depressed him, that friendship seemed tame and cold, that life looked desolate, and that every year had been brighter to him than the last. But this seriousness was only the shadow of melancholy that early comes over children of ideal temper, when first the shock of contrast is felt between hope and existing facts, and from dreams of Eden youth wakes in the desert; when reverence is forced to see that the best earthly friends can fail, and conscience reveals a host of inward foes; when chivalrous honour, cherished in fancy, is confronted with actual meanness; when life presents itself as a long series of struggles or compromises, and enthusiasm holds parley with prudence, and the saddened spirit seeks, in religious aspirations, poetic visions, and communion with nature's order and freshness, solace and strength. Out of such discords, the earnest learn, as he did, to draw harmonies which make after life a hymn of praise and a triumphal march. He was testing the wealth of the inward world intrusted to his regency, learning the obligations of duty, and arming himself with love for the conquest of evil. These retiring

habits did not make him morose, but taught him self-respect, the courage to deny temptation, distaste for the trivial and vulgar, and loftiness of aim.

Among his playmates he seems to have been always noted for a certain greatness of character. They called him "Peacemaker" and "Little King Pepin." He is described as having been small and delicate, yet muscular and active, with a very erect person, quick movement, a countenance that, while sedate, was cheerful, and a singularly sweet smile, which he never lost through life. When with companions, he was exuberant in spirits, overflowing with energy, ready to join heartily in all amusements, but never boisterous. He was much beloved by the children of the school and neighbourhood, though even then acting as an exhorter; for he used to rebuke among them all profaneness or obscenity; but this was done with a gentle tone, that manifested rather sorrow than anger, and was well received. His character was thus early marked by mingled strength and sweetness, though by some accounts it would appear that he was by no means free from irritability. He loved power, too; and such was his sway, among even the quarrelsome, that when his voice was heard, persuading them to order, he was readily obeyed. Sufficient fire, however, was latent under his mildness to give him energy. On one occasion he flogged a boy larger than himself, who had imposed, as he thought, upon one weaker. And on another, when the pupils of Mr. Rogers's school had collected in expectation of an attack from the boys of a different part of the town, William urged them to go and meet the others and settle the matter at once; he disapproved of delay and mere talking. He was a remarkable wrestler also, excelled in pitching the quoit, liked adventurous sports, was fond of climbing to the masthead of vessels at the wharf, and once, when sliding rapidly down a stay, narrowly escaped being dashed on deck, the swift descent tearing the skin from his hands. Through life, indeed, he had unflinching physical as well as moral courage, and seemed unconscious of fear. One anecdote may serve to show how early this intrepidity was manifested. In those days the good people of Newport were very superstitious,—as was the case, in fact, generally throughout the country,—and a vessel lying in the stream had the reputation of being haunted. All manner of rumours were spread as to strange noises and doings on board. To throw ridicule on the

prevailing panic, William proposed to pass the night in her. But though he anxiously desired it, his friends forbade his going,—of course, not from belief in ghosts, but from fear of injury that might be done to him through wantonness or ill design. He was officer, too, it seems, in a company of boys that marched to salute Count Rochambeau when he was on a visit at Newport, upon which occasion the young commander made an address, and marshalled his troop, with a spirit that won much admiration.

If these trifling mementos indicate a generous and high-spirited character, there are others which illustrate his thoughtfulness and disinterestedness. Among them, one may be worth noting, because it proves that he had instinctively adopted in early years the rule which strictly governed his manhood, of "letting not his left hand know what his right hand did." A man sick and in distress begged one day at the door William observed him, but was silent, and gave nothing at the time. When the beggar had gone, however, he was seen to follow him out, and to put into his hand some pieces of money, which must have been all that he had. It is remembered, too, that he used to visit a friendless and desolate old man in the neighbourhood, carrying with him such comforts as he could command; and interest generally in the poor, deference for the aged, and considerate regard for the feelings and rights of domestics in the family, gained for him the warm affection due to the liberal and loving.

The same gentle and kind disposition manifested itself in his treatment of animals, as, in a letter written soon after leaving college, he thus himself declares:—

"Thanks to my stars, I can say I have never killed a bird. I would not crush the meanest insect which crawls upon the ground. They have the same right to life that I have, they received it from the same Father, and I will not mar the works of God by wanton cruelty.

"I can remember an incident in my childhood, which has given a turn to my whole life and character. I found a nest of birds in my father's field, which held four young ones. They had no down when I first discovered them. They opened their little mouths as if they were hungry, and I gave them some crumbs which were in my pocket. Every day I returned to feed them. As soon as school was done, I would run home for some bread, and sit by the nest to see them eat, for an hour at a time. They were now feathered, and almost

ready to fly. When I came one morning, I found them all cut up into quarters. The grass round the nest was red with blood. Their little limbs were raw and bloody. The mother was on a tree, and the father on the wall, mourning for their young. I cried, myself, for I was a child. I thought, too, that the parents looked on me as the author of their miseries, and this made me still more unhappy. I wanted to undeceive them. I wanted to sympathize with and comfort them. When I left the field, they followed me with their eyes and with mournful reproaches. I was too young and too sincere in my grief to make any apostrophes. But I can never forget my feelings. The impression will never be worn away, nor can I ever cease to abhor every species of inhumanity towards inferior animals."

In connexion with this letter, and as illustrating his sympathy with the lower creation, it is remembered that he reared, while quite young, a brood of chickens, devoting himself to them with the tenderest care; and that once, seeing in a trap some rats which were to be drowned, he was so much affected by their evident distress, that he opened the door and let them go.

This sketch of William's boyhood cannot be more fitly closed than with the following letter from his friend in youth, and friend till death, our poet-painter, Washington Allston.

"I know not that I could better describe him than as an *open, brave, and generous boy.* The characters of boys are, I believe, almost always truly estimated by their companions, —at least morally, though perhaps seldom intellectually; and these are generally assigned to the several classes of the open or the cunning, the generous or the mean, the brave or the cowardly. And I well remember, though he was several months my junior (a matter of some importance among children), that I always looked up to him even in boyhood with respect; nor can I recall a single circumstance that ever weakened that feeling. In our games, he was never known to take any undue advantage, but would give way at once, where there was the least doubt on the point at issue. And though he was but scantily provided with pocket-money his little chance supplies seemed, in the schoolboy phrase, always to "burn in his pocket;" he could neither keep it there, nor ever expend it wholly on himself. On one occasion, when quite a little boy, he had a present from a relative of a dollar.

Such an excess of wealth was never before in his possession; and I can now bring before me the very expression of glee with which he came among us, to disencumber himself of the load. This is the only incident that I can now recall, and this must have been full fifty years ago. He had the same large heart when a boy, that animated him to the last. His intellectual endowments are known to the world; but only his early companions, who have survived him, can bear witness to the rare uniformity of his moral worth; man and boy, he was, in their true sense, high-minded and noble-hearted."

At the age of twelve, William was sent to New London, to prepare for college, under the care of his uncle, the Rev. Henry Channing. And it was while he was residing there, that, on the 21st of September, 1793, his father died. He was sent for home; and an aged friend of the family still describes the deep and general sympathy called out by the appearance of the funeral, when Francis, the eldest son, then in college, and William, now a boy of thirteen years, with their widowed mother and the younger children, followed the coffin of their beloved and universally honoured parent through the streets of Newport.

This death made a momentous change in the condition of the family, and threw a heavy load of responsibility on the elder sons; for the father, though most industrious in his profession, and engaged in large business, had been thus far able to lay up but a small property; and the mother, though wise and energetic, found herself oppressed with a weight of care in the charge of nine children. It is easy to see that the effect of such a loss upon a boy full of sensibility, conscientious and resolute, like William, must have been to stimulate him to the exercise of every power, and to the most rapid preparation for a time when he might maintain himself and assist his family. From easy independence and cheering worldly prospects, he and his had suddenly become poor; and at the earliest moment it was necessary that he should free his mother from the burden of his support. More than that, the head of the house was taken; and he and his elder brother must now become their mother's advisers, and guardians of those younger. The character of independent energy, and thoughtful oversight for every member of his family, thus early awakened, grew stronger through life. Doubtless, however, a shade of premature seriousness was

given to his temper. The effect of this bereavement is shown by an extract from a letter of his grandfather Ellery, who says:—

"Your letters have afforded me great delight, for they have all discovered that affectionate regard for your mother, your brothers and sisters, and your other relatives, which naturally flows from a feeling and ingenuous mind, and indicates an amiable disposition."

His brother, too, writes:—

"The goodness of heart which you possess will, I doubt not, ever keep you desirous of liberating our mother from her cares. Pass with her all the moments you can steal from healthful recreations and necessary studies, and let the kind attentions of filial affection be a return for the unrequitable tenderness which we, her beloved children, have received. Your brothers and sisters esteem you for your friendly disposition. Yes, William, you are happy in possessing the goodwill of all."

At New London, he remained a year and more; and his uncle, writing to him soon after he entered college, thus describes the impression which his character and conduct had left:—

"It gave me sensible pleasure to find you, my dear nephew, retaining the same animated sensibility which rendered you capable of receiving and communicating happiness, and secured you cordial welcome while resident in my family. Your aunt loves you tenderly, and often expresses her feelings while recounting your affectionate respect and attention. Never did you excite one painful emotion in our breasts, but always with you our hearts were made glad. We never can forget such a nephew, or rather, such a son."

That he was earnest and successful in his studies also appears by the following extract from another letter of his uncle, who was his instructor:—

"Without flattery, I can only say that your progress was more the result of your assiduity than of my attention.

"I am pleased with your observations upon the expectations of your friends, and your determination to endeavour to realize them. We know that your situation and your genius justify us in forming the most flattering ideas of the future eminence of our nephew. . . . . Permit me to indulge

the hope that you will continue to possess and cherish that modesty and deference to superiors which has hitherto been a distinguishing trait in your character."

These were strong words of praise to draw from one singularly exacting of courteous respect; and who, though kind in heart, was severely precise in manners. To this uncle he owed much in every way, and especially for the tone given to his religious feelings. Mr. Henry Channing had then been settled for many years in New London; and amid the gloomy Calvinism of Connecticut had preserved a spirit free and bright, cheerful in hope, and utterly intolerant of bigotry. New London was in the midst of one ot the "Revivals," which then were quite generally oversweeping New England. And Mr. Channing, though of the more liberal body, sympathized so far in the excitement, that a new spiritual interest was awakened in his own society; and the mind of William received such deep and lasting impressions, that he dated back to that period the commencement of a decidedly religious life. His feelings towards New London were, in consequence of this era in his inward experience, always strong; and we find a college classmate writing to him thus on the occasion of his revisiting it:—"I hope that the poor pilgrim has ere this trod on the consecrated ground of Palestine. New London you view with a partial eye, as the place where you acquired those habits of virtue and morality which have always influenced your conduct. Pleasant it must be to retrace these scenes of former times."

From New London, William went to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he entered Harvard College, as freshman, in 1794, being then in his fifteenth year. And thus closed a boyhood that, in its elements and results, in the blending of generous impulses and fine powers, with high principle and pure habits, gave promise of greatness which the future was amply to redeem.

Chap. III. — COLLEGE LIFE.

æt. 14–18. 1794–1798.

In tracing the growth of William's mind and character during the important period of college life, it is of interest to understand the influences which surrounded him; and of these

a graphic sketch is presented in the following letter from his classmate and friend, Judge Story.*

"You express a desire 'to obtain some general views of the circumstances under which the students lived.' I believe that this can be best done by giving you a brief sketch of the state of college, and the relation which the students had with the existing college government. Things are so much changed since, that it is somewhat difficult to realize all the influences which then surrounded them. In the first place, as to the course of studies. It was far more confined and limited than at present. In Greek, we studied Xenophon's Anabasis, and a few Books of the Iliad; in Latin, Sallust and a few Books of Livy; in Mathematics, Saunderson's Algebra, and a work on Arithmetic; in Natural Philosophy, Enfield's Natural Philosophy and Ferguson's Astronomy; in Rhetoric, an abridgment of Blair's Lectures, and the article on Rhetoric in the 'Preceptor;' in Metaphysics, Watts's Logic, and Locke on the Human Understanding; in History, Millot's Elements; in theology, Doddridge's Lectures; in grammatical studies, Lowth's Grammar. I believe this is near the whole, if not the whole, course of our systematical studies. The College Library was at that time far less comprehensive and suited to the wants of students than at present. It was not as easily accessible; and, indeed, was not frequented by them. No modern language was taught, except French, and that only one day in the week, by a non-resident instructor.

"The means of knowledge from external sources was very limited. The intercourse between us and foreign countries was infrequent; and I might almost say that we had no means of access to any literature and science, except the English. Even in respect to this, we had little more than a semi-annual importation of the most common works; and a few copies supplied and satisfied the market. The English periodicals were then few in number; and I do not remember any one that was read by the students, except the Monthly Magazine (the old Monthly), and that was read but by a few. I have spoken of our semi-annual importations; and it is literally true, that two ships only plied as regular packets between Boston and London, one in the spring and one in the autumn, and their arrival was an era in our college life.

"In respect to academical intercourse, the students had

* Letter to W. F. Channing.

literally none that was not purely official, except with each other. The different classes were almost strangers to each other; and cold reserve generally prevailed between them. The system of 'fagging' (as it was called) was just then dying out, and I believe that my own class was the first that was not compelled to perform this drudgery at the command of the Senior class, in the most humble services. The students had no connexion whatsoever with the inhabitants of Cambridge by private social visits. There was none between the families of the president and professors of the college and the students. The *régime* of the old school in manners and habits then prevailed. The president and professors were never approached except in the most formal way, and upon official occasions; and in the college yard (if I remember rightly) no student was permitted to be with his hat on, if one of the professors was there. President Willard was a sound scholar, of great dignity of manners, but cold and somewhat forbidding in his demeanour. Professor Tappan belonged to the old school of theology, and had much of the grave courtesy of the clergymen of that school. Professor Webber was modest, mild, and quiet, but unconquerably reserved and staid. Professor Pearson was an excellent critic, but somewhat severe and exact in his requirements; and I think we all greatly profited by his instructions, even when we thought them not delivered in the most gentle accents. Our tutors were young men, and I must add that they were most diligent and conscientious in their duties. Some of them must be known to you, for they are still living. Mr., afterwards Professor, Popkin; Mr., afterwards Professor, Hedge; and Mr., now Rev. Dr., Pierce, of Brookline. I must do all our instructors, the professors as well as the tutors, the justice to say, that their instructions were very valuable to us, and that they all took a deep and earnest interest in our advancement. For myself, I must own that at this distant day I entertain the liveliest gratitude to them for the aid given by them to me in awakening and guiding my love of letters. But private social access to them did not belong to the habits of the times, and a free and easy intercourse with them, which would now not be considered unbecoming, would at that time have been thought somewhat obtrusive on one side, and, on the other, would have exposed the student to the imputation of being what in technical language was called a 'fisherman,'—a rank and noxious character in college annals.

"These suggestions may at once put you in possession of the *intra-mœnial* influences of college life. In general, the students were then moral, devoted to their studies, and ambitious of distinction. There would be then, as now, an occasional outbreak; but I am not aware that either immorality, or dissipation, or habitual indolence, was more in fashion than in succeeding times. There will always be a little sprinkling of these among students of an ardent and reckless character. In one particular a salutary change in the habits of life has taken place. There is universally far more temperance now than then, in the use of wine and spirituous liquors. But the instances of excess were rare; and were always frowned upon by classmates.

"Passing from what may be deemed the interior influences of college life, I would say a few words as to those which were exterior. And here the principal inquiry would undoubtedly be, What was the influence of the metropolis in the immediate neighbourhood? I have no difficulty in saying, that it was very slight indeed, compared with what Boston now exerts with so much potency and variety of operation. The intercourse between the students and Boston was, when my class entered college, infrequent and casual. West Boston bridge had been completed but a short period before; the road was then new and not well settled; the means of communication from Cambridge were almost altogether by walking; and the inducements to visit in private circles far less attractive than at present. Social intercourse with the young, and especially with students, was not much cultivated; and invitations to social parties in Boston rarely extended to college circles. The literature and science, the taste, and talent, and learning, now so abundantly found in that interesting city, have been in a great measure the growth of later times; and the result is the gradual progress of wealth and refinement, and a more comprehensive education. If the college in this way lost much of the advantage arising from the zeal, and ambition, and brilliant eloquence of later days, it is but just to add that it escaped also some of the dangerous allurements which now surround the paths of the young on every side.

"Now, from what I have ventured to suggest, I believe, that, during the collegiate life of your father, the exterior influences of the literature and science and social refinements of Boston were not of a nature to bear much upon his habits and pursuits.

"There is one circumstance, however, which is here brought to my thoughts, on which I would for a moment dwell, because I am quite sure that it gave a powerful impulse to his ambition. At that period, all the scholars of the class attended together in the recitation-room at the same time, and of course recited their lessons in the presence of each other. The average number in the classes did not generally vary in any important degree from the numbers now in college,—at least not to a degree which would even now make the assemblage of the whole class in the same room inconvenient or burdensome. This general assemblage of the whole class in the same room at the same time had, in my judgment, the most beneficial influence. In the first place, it enabled the whole class clearly and accurately to ascertain the relative scholarship and attainments of each scholar; and thus one great source of jealousy, the suspicion of partiality on the part of the college faculty, was either extinguished or greatly mitigated, and I do not hesitate to say that the relative rank then assigned to the various members of the class by their own classmates was generally correct, impartial, and satisfactory. In the next place, a generous spirit of emulation pervaded the whole class. We were proud of our best scholars, and awarded them just praise with a liberal courtesy; and those who were thus distinguished were stimulated by high motives to deserve and to secure this approbation. No man, I am persuaded, felt more, or appreciated more justly, than your father, this truly valuable incentive to exertion. He had then, as in his after life, a lofty ambition for excellence; and he sought reputation by aims as pure and moral as they were enlightened. I must confess that I have never ceased to regret, that the old system, the advantages of which I have thus briefly alluded to, has ever been departed from in the college arrangements. If this were the proper time or place, I would state many reasons why I hold this opinion, and which, at least in my own judgment, make the change more than a doubtful innovation."

It was amid these influences and opportunities that William's genius and faculties were to be matured. He was now in his fifteenth year, vigorous in health, elastic in spirits, in temper, as we have seen, enthusiastic yet self-governed, with powers active and well disciplined; and thus in every way fitted to enter upon this critical era of life. All who then

remember him speak with especial pleasure of his animated expression, of his buoyant yet dignified manner, and of his general appearance of overflowing life. Washington Allston writes:—

"Though small in stature, his person at that time was rather muscular than slender; I should think it was even athletic, from the manner in which he prolonged the contests with heavier antagonists, in the wrestling matches that were then common among the students. And for animal spirits, he was no less remarkable than for his intellectual enthusiasm; amounting occasionally to unrestrained hilarity, but never passing the bounds of propriety. I well remember his *laugh*, which could not have been heartier without being obstreperous."

This laughter is said to have been not rarely called out by this very friend, who, possessed of the most radiant humour, penetration, and sweetness, charming from his courtesy of manner and nobleness of feeling, endowed with an imagination that threw a lustre round every theme he touched, was then, as through life, a centre of attraction to all who could appreciate rare genius, eloquence, and refinement almost feminine in delicacy. Allston's room was on the way from the house where William lived to the college; and there he used to stop for friendly chat, while going to or coming from the lecture-room. One day, he had a lesson to be accompanied with original designs in mensuration, and Allston, who was already skilful in the use of his pencil, proposed to give him an illustration. It consisted of pyramids of figures heaped upon one another's shoulders in various attitudes, each of which was a slightly caricatured portrait of the professors and tutors. This William offered at recitation; and the drawing was so spirited, and the jest in itself so harmless, that the instructor could not but join heartily with the class in the merriment it excited. This slight anecdote is mentioned, because it indicates a latent vein of humour, which, though hidden in after years under a manner habitually serious, did yet occasionally emit scintillations.

The Rev. Dr. Peirce, who was then his tutor, adds the following description of William as a student:—

"I have a distinct recollection of him, as, at that time, a fine-looking, healthy, muscular young man. But what I best remember was his excellence as a scholar. My department was the Latin language; and never shall I forget, while

memory lasts, with what promptitude and elegance he rendered into English the passages from the classics which he was called to recite. I also heard his class in History. He was always in his place; and I invariably gave him the highest mark for good recitations. The government of the university were, I believe, unanimous in assigning him the first rank among his classmates. This, in a class containing such men as Judge Story, William Williams, Artemas Sawyer, Joseph Emerson, Dr. Tuckerman, &c., was no small honour."

The classmate, from whom has been already quoted the sketch of the influences which surrounded the students, thus beautifully completes his friend's portrait as he was in college:—

"I became a member," writes Judge Story, "of the same class in January, 1795, and was then first introduced to him. He resided during the whole of his collegiate course with his uncle, whose house was at some distance from the colleges; and partly from this fact, and partly from his reserved, although bland, deportment, he did not associate much with his classmates generally, at the same time that he drew about him a circle of choice and select friends from the most distinguished of his class, with whom he indulged in the most frank, social intercourse, and by whom he was greatly beloved and respected. So blameless was his life, so conciliatory his manners, and so unobtrusive his conduct, that he enjoyed the rare felicity of being universally esteemed by all his classmates, even by those to whom he was least known, except in the lecture room as a fellow-student. The little strifes, and jealousies, and rivalries of college life, in those days, scarcely reached him; and his own rank in scholarship was, from the beginning to the conclusion of his academical career, admitted to be of the highest order. I do not believe that he had a single personal enemy during that whole period, and I am sure that he never deserved to have any; and his early reputation, as it budded, and blossomed, and bore its fruits, was cherished by all his class as common property. We were proud of his distinctions, and gratified when he was praised. We all then prophesied his future eminence, in whatever profession he should make his choice. Speaking for myself, I can truly say, that the qualities of mind and character, which then were unfolded to my own view, were precisely the same which in after life gave him such celebrity.

"Perhaps in no single study was he superior to all his

classmates. In the classical studies of that day he was among the first, if not the first; in Latin more accomplished than in Greek. For mathematics and metaphysics he had little relish. He performed the prescribed tasks in these subjects with care and diligence, but with no ambition for distinction, or pride of purpose. His principal love was for historical and literary studies; for English literature in its widest extent, and for those comprehensive generalizations upon human life, institutions, and interests, which his enthusiasm for the advancement of his race and his purity of heart led him to cherish and cultivate with profound attachment. I remember well with what a kindling zeal he spoke on all such subjects; and one might almost then see playing about him the gentle graces and the rapt devotion of a Fénelon.

"In one particular he far excelled all his classmates; and I mention it, because it is precisely that which in after life constituted the basis of his fame;—I mean his power of varied and sustained written composition. It was racy, flowing, full, glowing with life, chaste in ornament, vigorous in structure, and beautiful in finish. It abounded with eloquence of expression,—the spontaneous effusion of a quick genius and a cultivated taste,—and was as persuasive as it was imposing. All of us—by which I mean his academical contemporaries—listened to his discourses at the literary exhibitions, and at commencement, with admiration and delight. If I might venture to rely on the impressions of those days, which yet fasten on my memory as truths unaffected by youthful excitement, I should be tempted to say that we all listened to him on these occasions with the most devoted attention; and that the mellifluous tones of his voice fell on our ears with somewhat of the power which Milton has attributed to Adam when the angel ended, so

> 'that we awhile
> Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear.'

I need scarcely add, that at the public exhibitions of his class he received the first and highest part; and on receiving his degree at commencement, took also the first and highest oration, with the approval of all his class that he was the worthiest of it, and that he was truly *princeps inter pares*. Honours thus early won and conceded are not without their

value or their use as prognostics of an auspicious and brilliant day."

It will please the generous to know, that while Judge Story thus so clearly bore testimony to his friend's pre-eminence as a scholar, Dr. Channing was equally decided in assigning the first place of honour to his distinguished classmate. He often said, "Judge Story was entitled to the first part; but he chose a poem, and the oration fell to me."

It may be encouraging to students, also, to learn that young Channing did not gain the charm of style referred to, without effort. He said that his first attempts were most awkward, and that he accustomed himself to compose mentally while walking to and from the college. He also studied elocution and rhetoric as an art, with the aid of Longinus, Harris, Watts, and Sheridan. He met friends, too, in private, to read and criticize each other's writings. Above all, he zealously took a part in the various literary societies, of his connexion with which the Hon. D. A. White of Salem, who, though in the class before Channing, yet knew him well, has communicated the following detailed account.

"His connexion with these societies could not fail to have an important influence in his education,—scarcely less, perhaps, taken in all its bearings, than the established course of college studies. The literary exercises and the social communion which these societies afforded were happily suited to the development of his fine powers and ardent sympathies, his free and independent spirit, his social, friendly, and benevolent heart. You will therefore be interested, I think, to know something of them.

"The first literary society in which we met as members was the Speaking Club, since called the Institute of 1770, the principal object of which was mutual improvement in elocution and oratory. The society consisted of members from the two middle classes, twelve to fifteen from each, chosen near the close of the Freshman year, and retiring at the close of the Junior year, with a valedictory address from one of the members previously appointed for the purpose. I find 'Channing' first mentioned among those chosen from his class. Young as he was, he was also elected their president. To show the impression which at that early period he made upon me, and I doubt not equally upon others, I

may observe, which I now distinctly remember. that in delivering the valedictory address in behalf of the members from my class, as my eye rested on him, I felt a respect for his taste and judgment, for his authority in criticism, which no other auditor inspired. I might apply the same remark to another occasion afterwards, in a different society, when I stood in a similar relation to him. The authority which he thus early acquired among us arose not more from his general reputation as a scholar and critic, than from the active part which he took in all our meetings, and the sound judgment and earnest eloquence which often distinguished his remarks. His whole deportment and conversation among his associates tended to the same result. With his natural ardour and enthusiasm were united so much dignity and sweetness of manner and disposition, that it was impossible to be acquainted with him, however transiently, without feeling for him a sincere respect and esteem.

"The practice of the Speaking Club, at their meetings, which were held in the evening at some retired room in the town of Cambridge, was, for a portion of the members to declaim in rotation, while each declaimer, after his performance, stood aside to receive the remarks which any of his brethren might think proper to offer. All apparent faults of the speaker, which he might correct, or which others should avoid, were freely pointed out and commented upon, yet always in a spirit of candour and kindness. Sometimes different views would be taken by various members, giving rise to interesting discussions. Thus these meetings became schools of mutual improvement in extemporaneous speaking, as well as correct elocution. No one could be better qualified to be both teacher and learner in such schools than young Channing. Full of life and energy, and actuated alike by an ardent love of knowledge and by social benevolence, his noble powers of thought and feeling were never suffered to sleep when any intellectual or moral good was attainable for himself or others.

"But improvement in public speaking was not the only, nor indeed the chief, advantage derived from being a member of this society. The general influence upon an ingenuous young man, arising from a liberal intercourse with so many of the most intelligent and virtuous scholars of various classes, engaged in a course of interesting exercises for their common benefit, could scarcely be too highly appreciated.

His interest in the proper objects of education would be increased, and his motives and views elevated above all unworthy pursuits, while he enjoyed the best means of knowing the real character of his most respectable classmates, and wisely forming those friendships which naturally spring from college intimacies, and which, when wisely formed, become blessings through life.

"Nearly at the same time that Mr. Channing left the Speaking Club, he was chosen into the society of the Phi Beta Kappa, and continued to enjoy, during his senior year, the advantages of an intimate literary intercourse with the distinguished scholars of his own class. You are too well acquainted with the character of this society, which has always been a public one, to make it necessary for me to say anything more about it than to give a general idea of the literary exercises and discussions which engaged the attention of its resident members at their regular meetings, during the last year at college. The object of these meetings was improvement in English composition, the art of reasoning, and the practice of speaking; and the principal exercises were dissertations and forensic arguments, previously written, and read at the meetings, with occasional debates and colloquial discussions.

"There was another society, of a similar intellectual character, into which Channing was elected, called the Adelphi, instituted in 1785, designed for religious improvement, but consisting principally of those members of the senior class who expected to study theology as a profession. Their meetings were held on Sunday evenings, and their exercises, which were of a devotional and religious character, were chiefly dissertations, or discourses, and discussions on topics connected with theology and the clerical profession.*

"The Hasty-Pudding Club, composed of members of the junior class, was formed more exclusively for social enjoyment and recreation. It originated with my class in 1795, at the beginning of our junior year, numbering about twenty associates. Being transmitted to the next class, as they commenced juniors, it became a permanent institution. I well remember the animating presence of Channing among those to whom we committed the society on the delivery of the

* Channing delivered before this society a discourse, which was so much liked, that he was strongly urged by his fellows to print it.

first anniversary address. The name of the club sufficiently shows the simplicity of the entertainment originally produced at their meetings, which were held on Saturday evenings, and appropriately closed with a hymn sung to the tune of St. Martin's.

"Discussions and debates were soon introduced at these meetings, and the society during the first year assumed a more literary and interesting character, becoming, in fact, a source of mutual improvement as well as enjoyment. Nothing could be more pure and rational than the pleasure and recreation which the members of this society enjoyed together.

"There was another social club, of a few years' longer standing, and of a more luxurious and convivial cast,—as its original name, the Porcellian, would seem to indicate,—into which Channing had the honour to be elected, but which could never have been congenial with his nature; and if he joined in its meetings at all, he soon abandoned them altogether.

"The three first-named societies, though rich in social and intellectual gratifications, were really working societies; and, during the three most important years of college life, served admirably well to occupy a portion of the leisure hours which the more industrious and gifted students found upon their hands, after fully attending to the course of studies and exercises then required by the laws of the university.

"The course of prescribed studies and exercises, together with those voluntarily pursued in the several societies now described, and the miscellaneous reading enjoyed by almost every student, afforded, if not a complete, yet a very excellent, system of instruction. It gave at least the bones and sinews and muscles, with much of the filling out, and something of the embellishment, of a sound and healthy education.

"To a young man of an ardent, social temperament, and original turn of thought, as well as a highly gifted mind and independent spirit of inquiry, it was especially desirable that the whole of his time at college should not be covered by the prescribed course of studies, but that a liberal portion of it should be left at his own disposal.

"The arrangement of the college exercises was then so wisely ordered, that the morning of every day, after the

breakfast hour, was almost wholly left, to the two upper classes especially, for uninterrupted study. Having thus secured to them the best hours of the day for close and vigorous application to study,—the best, certainly, both for the acquisition of knowledge and the development and discipline of the intellectual faculties,—and having the evening also at their command, whether for study, or the enjoyment of its most interesting results at their literary meetings, they had ample time for all their prescribed and voluntary exercises and pursuits, with the most animating motives to diligent and persevering application. I cannot, therefore, easily imagine a more eligible situation for young Channing than the one he enjoyed while a student in Harvard College,—considering, too, his peculiar advantage of living in the family of his uncle, the late Chief Justice Dana, where the want of refined domestic society, the principal defect of an academic residence, was so entirely supplied to him. Most faithfully did he improve the various privileges he enjoyed—making, undoubtedly, more rapid progress in good learning and intellectual accomplishments than any of his fellow-students, or than he himself ever made in any other equal portion of his life."

Thus far a view has been offered of the general influences, only, which helped to form young Channing's mind. But far more fruitful germs were planted in him by the religious and social excitements of the time, which were scattering, as by the hands of the tempest, the seeds of new views of man, society, and human life. He has fortunately left the following mementos of the power which this stirring period exerted upon himself:—

"College was never in a worse state than when I entered it. Society was passing through a most critical stage. The French Revolution had diseased the imagination and unsettled the understanding of men everywhere. The old foundations of social order, loyalty, tradition, habit, reverence for antiquity, were everywhere shaken, if not subverted. The authority of the past was gone. The old forms were outgrown, and new ones had not taken their place. The tone of books and conversation was presumptuous and daring. The tendency of all classes was to scepticism. At such a moment, the difficulties of education were necessarily multiplied. The work required men of comprehensive and original minds, able to adapt themselves to the new state

of the world. It is not to be wondered at, that the government and teachers of the college, most of them of mature years, and belonging to the old school, should understand little of the wants of the times. The system of government and instruction went on very much as it had done for years before, and the result was, a state of great insubordination, and the almost total absence of the respect due to individuals of so much worth. The state of morals among the students was anything but good; but poverty, a dread of debt, well-chosen friends, the pleasures of intellectual improvement, regard to my surviving parent, and an almost instinctive shrinking from gross vice, to which natural timidity and religious principle contributed not a little, proved effectual safeguards. I look back on the innocence of my early life with no self-complacency, and with no disposition to exalt myself above those who yielded to temptation, and among whom I doubt not were much nobler characters than my own. But I do recollect it with great satisfaction, and with fervent gratitude to Divine Providence. Had the bounds of purity once been broken, I know not that I should ever have returned to virtue."

Judge White bears a similar testimony. He writes:—

"To give you some idea of the lively interest taken in these subjects by him and the students generally at that time, I will copy a passage respecting it from my journal.—'When I entered college, the French Revolution had broken up the foundations of religion and morals, as well as government, and continued to rage for some years with its utmost fury, spreading its disastrous influence throughout the civilized world, and pouring upon our country a flood of infidel and licentious principles. Our colleges could not escape the contagion of these principles; and I have no doubt that to these, and the pernicious books embodying them, much of the disorderly conduct, and most of the infidel and irreligious spirit, which prevailed at that period among the students at Cambridge, may justly be attributed. The patrons and governors of the college made efforts to counteract the effect of these fatal principles by exhortation, and preaching, and prayer, as well as by the publication and distribution of good books and pamphlets.

"'Watson's Apology for the Bible, in answer to Paine's Age of Reason, was published or furnished for the students at college, by the corporation, in 1796, and every one of

them was presented with a copy. So deeply and so generally had the French *mania* seized upon the popular mind in this country, and so susceptible of its fiery influence were the ardent spirits of young men, all alive to freedom of thought, of action, and indulgence, that reason, argument, and persuasion had for a time no power against it. Its own horrible manifestation of itself at length gave them power to overcome it, and scholars as well as people were roused from their delusion, and brought to look back upon it with shame and amazement.'"

It was the native tone of young Channing's spirit, however, which made these movements of the age instructive to him. Judge Story most justly adds:—

"From what has been already stated, you will readily be enabled to comprehend the general influences, the genius of the place, which surrounded your father during his college life. If I were to venture, however, upon giving an opinion upon such a subject, necessarily conjectural, I should say that there were few or none, of an external character, either powerful or active. What he then was, was mainly owing to the impulses of his own mind and heart—warm, elevated, ambitious of distinction, pure, and energetic. His associations were with the best scholars of his class. His friendships were mainly confined to them. He neither loved nor courted the idle or the indifferent; and with the vicious he had no communion of pursuit or feeling. He then loved popularity, but it was the popularity (as has been well said on another occasion) that follows, and is not sought after. It is that which is won by the pursuit of noble ends by noble means. But I cannot help thinking that external influences were not those which mainly contributed to fix the character of his life. The influences which seem to me to have regulated his pursuits, his taste, his feelings, and his principles, were chiefly from within;—the workings of genius upon large materials, a deep and wakeful sensibility, an ardent love of truth and moral purity, a conscience quickened and chastened by an earnest sense of religious obligation, and a spirit elevated by a warm interest in the human race."

And this leads to what was his most vital experience in college. The more his character and mind matured, the more earnestly did he devote himself to aspirations after moral greatness. He read with delight the Stoics, and was profoundly moved by the stern purity which they inculcated.

But the two authors who most served to guide his thoughts at this period were Hutcheson and Ferguson. It was while reading, one day, in the former, some of the various passages in which he asserts man's capacity for disinterested affection, and considers virtue as the sacrifice of private interests and the bearing of private evils for the public good, or as self-devotion to absolute, universal good, that there suddenly burst upon his mind that view of the dignity of human nature, which was ever after to "uphold and cherish" him, and thenceforth to be "the fountain light of all his day, the master light of all his seeing." He was, at the time, walking as he read, beneath a clump of willows yet standing in the meadow a little to the north of Judge Dana's. This was his favourite retreat for study, being then quite undisturbed and private, and offering a most serene and cheerful prospect across green meadows and the glistening river to the Brookline hills. The place and the hour were always sacred in his memory, and he frequently referred to them with grateful awe. It seemed to him, that he then passed through a new spiritual birth, and entered upon the day of eternal peace and joy. The glory of the Divine disinterestedness, the privilege of existing in a universe of progressive order and beauty, the possibilities of spiritual destiny, the sublimity of devotedness to the will of Infinite Love, penetrated his soul; and he was so borne away in rapturous visions, that, to quote his own words, as spoken to a friend in later years,—"I longed to die, and felt as if heaven alone could give room for the exercise of such emotions; but when I found I must live, I cast about to do something worthy of these great thoughts; and my enthusiasm at that age, being then but fifteen, turning strongly to the female sex, I considered that they were the powers which ruled the world, and that, if they would bestow their favour on the right cause only, and never be diverted by caprice, all would be fitly arranged, and triumph was sure. Animated with this view, which unfolded itself with great rapidity and in many bearings, I sat down and wrote to this lady,"—laying his hand upon his wife's arm, who was listening by his side,—"but I never got courage to send the letter, and have it yet." This holy hour was but the first wind-flower of the spring, however, the opening of a long series of experiences by which he was to be led up to perfect consecration. It is a significant fact, that in this time of exaltation, when the young moral knight-errant took

his vow of fidelity and was girt with the sword of love, his heart should have instinctively sought the concert in action of woman. This faith in her power of disinterested virtue, so early felt, grew always stronger; and if disappointment in the characters and deeds of men made him ever falter for a moment in his generous aims, he found his hope and heroism renewed by woman's purity and earnestness.

As Hutcheson was the medium of awakening within him the consciousness of an exhaustless tendency in the human soul to moral perfection, so Ferguson on Civil Society was the means of concentrating his energies upon the thought of social progress. Years afterwards, his remembrance of the enthusiasm in the cause of humanity, first called out in him by this book, was so strong, that he recommended it in terms which would certainly be thought by most readers greatly to exaggerate its merits. But it is instructive thus to learn the agency whence the mind and will of a man who in after life made himself so widely felt received their peculiar direction. In his junior year he had already become a moral and social reformer.

In the letter describing his classmate's position as a student, Judge Story says he had but little relish for mathematics and metaphysics. This was, however, a misconception, and is contradicted by his own explicit statements. Indeed, his taste was prematurely developed for philosophical investigation. His very earliest attempt at sustained composition was an essay on Electricity; and his love of natural science was always strong. He delighted, too, in geometry, and felt so rare a pleasure in the perfection of its demonstrations, that he took the fifth book of Euclid with him as an entertainment during one vacation. In relation to this point, his classmate, W. Williams, writes:—

"The Sophomore year gave us Euclid to measure our strength. Many halted at the '*pons asinorum.*' But Channing could go over clear at the first trial, as could some twelve or fifteen of us. This fact is stated to show that he had a mind able to comprehend the abstrusities of mathematics, though to my apprehension he excelled more decidedly in the Latin and Greek classics, and had a stronger inclination to polite literature."

But it was man's spiritual nature and relations which chiefly attracted his attention. He carefully studied, at this time, Locke, Berkeley, Reid, Hume, Priestley, and especially

Price. And while reading Jouffroy, in 1840, he said to a friend,—"I have found here a fact which interests me personally very much. Jouffroy says that Dr. Price's Dissertations were translated into German at the time of their first appearance, and produced a much greater impression there than they did in England; and he thinks they were the first movers of the German mind in the transcendental direction. Now, I read Price when I was in college. Price saved me from Locke's Philosophy. He gave me the doctrine of ideas, and during my life I have written the words Love, Right, &c., with a capital. That book probably moulded my philosophy into the form it has always retained."

One other intellectual influence, which took strong hold of him, deserves, too, special notice. This was the newly revived interest in Shakspeare. The young men at Harvard were just then passionately given up to the study of the great dramatist; they contemplated with awe the ever various array of character and incident which the mighty master had evoked from silence into life; they worked the veins of profound philosophy, worldly wisdom, natural joy, to which he welcomed them in his exhaustless mines; they took note of his artistic skill in the general arrangement of his plays, examined critically the minuter beauties of his conceptions and style, committed favourite passages to memory, conversed about him, quoted him; and Channing's taste was so much moulded by the impression of his genius, that through life he was delighted by few intellectual treats so highly as by recitations from England's first poet.

The political questions of the day, however, were the most quickening excitement to a spirit so philanthropic and hopeful, and through his whole college course Channing was a fervent politician. As has before been said, one of his most favourite studies was history, and among his manuscripts of this period is a long, minute, and carefully prepared essay on the English Revolution. In public and private, in friendly conversation, debating societies, themes, and college parts, he took every occasion to manifest his sympathy with the social agitations of the age. But the most definite evidence of his political zeal may be found in the two following incidents, the first of which is thus narrated by Judge Story:—

"There was one circumstance of a public and political character, which was felt with no small intensity among us

near the close of our collegiate life. I allude to the political controversies between our national government and that of France, which then agitated the whole country, and ultimately led to that sort of *quasi* war and non-intercourse which the public history of the times has fully explained. The party then known by the name of Federalists possessed a very large portion of the wealth, the talents, and the influence of the country. President Adams was then at the head of the national administration; a majority of Congress supported all his leading measures; and in New England his popularity was almost unbounded, and sustained by a weight of opinion and of numbers which is without example in our country. The opposition to his administration here was comparatively small, although in the Southern States it was formidable. Party spirit ran exceedingly high, and, indeed, with almost irrepressible fury. Badges of loyalty to our own government and of hatred to France were everywhere worn in New England, and the cockade was a signal of patriotic devotion to 'Adams and liberty.'

"It was impossible that the academical walls could escape the common contagion. The students became exceedingly interested in the grave questions then before the country. They were nearly all united, heart and hand, in favour of the national administration, and warmly espoused the cause of their country. In our Senior year (1798), your father, who was among the most warm and decided in his political opinions, procured a meeting to be had of the students, with the sanction of the college government, for the purpose of expressing their opinions on the then existing crisis of our public affairs. The meeting was held. He made a very eloquent and powerful speech, and was seconded with great zeal and earnestness by myself and others. The result was, that a committee was appointed to draw up an address to President Adams, of which your father was the chairman. The address, with the exception of a single passage, afterwards added, was written by himself; it was reported to the students, and was by them accepted by acclamation. It was sent to President Adams, who made a written reply in a very commendatory style; and both the address and the answer were published in the newspapers of the day, and received general applause."

In the *Boston Centinel* of May 19, 1798, it is found thus reported:—

"HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

"The committee of the students of Harvard, mentioned in the last *Centinel*, offered the following address, which was immediately signed by one hundred and seventy students.*

"ADDRESS

"TO HIS EXCELLENCY JOHN ADAMS,

"PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

"SIR,—We flatter ourselves you will not be displeased at hearing that the walls of your native seminary are now inhabited by youth possessing sentiments congenial with your own. We do not pretend to great political sagacity; we wish only to convince mankind that we inherit the intrepid spirit of our ancestors, and disdain submission to the will of a rapacious, lawless, and imperious nation. Though removed from active life, we have watched with anxiety the interests of our country. We have seen a nation in Europe grasping at universal conquest, trampling on the laws of God and nations, systematizing rapine and plunder, destroying foreign governments by the strength of her arms or the pestilence of her embraces, and scattering principles which subvert social order, raise the storms of domestic faction, and perpetuate the horrors of revolution. We have seen this same nation violating our neutral rights, spurning our pacific proposals, her piratical citizens sweeping our ships from the seas, and venal presses under her control pouring out torrents of abuse on men who have grown gray in our service. We have seen her ministers in this country insulting our government by a daring, unprecedented, and contemptuous appeal to the people, and her agents at home offering conditions which slaves whose necks have grown to the yoke would reject with indignation. We have seen this, Sir, and our youthful blood has boiled within us. When, in opposition to such conduct, we contemplate the measures of our own government, we cannot but admire and venerate the unsullied integrity, the decisive prudence, and dignified firmness which have uniformly characterized your administration. Impressed with these sentiments, we now solemnly offer the unwasted ardour

* The college contained at that time about 173 students, according to the number of graduates in the Triennial Catalogue for 1798, 1799, 1800, and 1801.

and unimpaired energies of our youth to the service of our country. Our lives are our only property; and we were not the sons of those who sealed our liberties with their blood, if we would not defend with these lives that soil which now affords a peaceful grave to the mouldering bones of our forefathers."

The other incident referred to at once illustrates the state of feeling in those times, and gives proof that the unconquerable love of free thought and speech, which characterized Channing's manhood, was strong in youth.

At the graduation of his class, the highest honour, that is, the closing oration at commencement, was assigned to him. The subject was "The Present Age." But a condition was added, that all political discussion should be excluded. The reason for this restriction was, that the students of the previous year had given great offence to the Democratic party by the severity of their remarks. And as the college faculty were on the Federal side, candour seemed to demand that commencement-day should not be embittered by political jealousies. They therefore prohibited the introduction of party questions. The class, however, were highly incensed at what they thought an intolerable infringement of their rights; and one of them wrote to Channing in the following fiery strain:—

"I could join you, my friend, in offering an unfeigned tear to the manes of those joys which are for ever fled; but indignation has dried up the source from which that tear must flow. The government of college have completed the climax of their despotism. They have obtained an *arrêt*, which from its features I could swear is the offspring of the French Directory. Although they pretend to be firm friends to American liberty and independence, their embargo on politics, which has subjected you to so many inconveniences, is strong proof to me that they are *Jacobins*, or at best *pretended patriots*, who have not courage to defend the rights of their country.

"William, should you be deprived of a degree for not performing at commencement, every friend of liberty must consider it as a glorious sacrifice on the altar of your country."

The "inconveniences" referred to arose from the fact, that Channing, so soon as he learned the restrictions, formally

declined to receive his part. The president at first accepted his resignation, thinking it improbable that a young man would be willing to give up the honours of the day, and even to endanger his degree, for such a trifle. But after a fortnight, finding him resolute, the government sent for him, insisted upon his performing his part, and made such concessions, that his brother, in writing to him, said,—"I think you have gained a most complete triumph. The government have certainly treated you with a most flattering courtesy; how could you expect them to yield more?" His grandfather uncles, mother, all joined, too, in urging him to rest contented with the concessions already made, declaring that "such advice would be approved in the very academy of honour; that even the pride of a knight-errant would not be wounded by the course; that he had struggled long enough for glory, and that yielding in this manner was rather a triumph than a defeat." Thus constrained by the entreaties of all who loved him, he finally agreed to comply with the terms which the government had granted to his firmness, and went to Newport to pass the vacation and write his oration. The explanations and assurances of the president permitted him to express himself freely; and though he softened and shortened what otherwise he would have said, he did not sacrifice conscience or self-respect. Throughout, it was a bold and earnest discussion of the exciting topics suggested by the French Revolution. In delivering it, he spoke with much dignity and decision; and rising, toward the close, to an impassioned burst of feeling, he said, with great energy, and a look directed to the faculty, which showed how earnestly he was inclined to protest against any restraint upon free speech, —"But that I am forbid, I could a tale unfold, which would harrow up your souls." As the circumstances thus referred to were generally known, this sally was received with unbounded applause; and when he left the stage, some time elapsed before the cheering ceased. "Many years," writes the distinguished classmate so often quoted, "have passed since then, but the impression left on my mind of the brilliancy, vividness, and eloquence of that oration is yet fresh."

With this characteristic act, at which, in later years, he was much amused for its excess of enthusiasm, Mr. Channing closed his college career in the summer of 1798.

Mr. Channing was now to select a profession. He had been a hard student, "not a mere seeker of a diploma," as his uncle Henry approvingly wrote, "but a real worker," and had gained universal respect for his rare powers and attainments; his memory had been stored by extensive reading, and his judgment enlarged by constant correspondence with his sound-headed and sound-hearted grandfather Ellery; he had joined cordially in social pleasures, though with strict regard to temperance,—it being remembered that Story and he invariably declined the use of wine, even at convivial entertainments,—and he had won the love of his associates by generous sentiments, cheerfulness, and unassuming courtesy; though so young, he had already taken decided ground as the advocate of high principles in religion, morals, and politics; he was all alive to his responsibilities, especially to his family in their poor estate; and now in what way could he best employ his energies and gifts? He did not hesitate as to his true calling. In his Junior year, indeed, he had written to Allston,—"I have no inclination for either divinity, law, or physic;" and still later he had so seriously thought of becoming a physician, that his grandfather wrote to him at length in relation to the duties and opportunities of that profession, and sent to him lists of the medical books which he should read. Even at the time when he graduated, most of his classmates supposed that he would choose the law, as the occupation best fitted to give free field for the exercise of his powers of eloquence, and urged him to take that course; but to all such appeals to his ambition he answered,—"I think there is a wider sphere for usefulness and honour in the ministry." The path of duty marked out for him by higher wisdom was plain. "In my Senior year," he writes, "the prevalence of infidelity, imported from France, led me to inquire into the evidences of Christianity, and then *I found for what I was made.* My heart embraced its great objects with an interest which has been increasing to this hour." He was the same man then that he manifested himself to be in mature life. As his classmate, the Hon. Richard Sullivan, bears witness, "there was in him the same clear and quick apprehension of truth, and the tendency to look higher than to human authority, the same warm interest in the good and beautiful, the same temperate earnestness and independence in maintaining opinions, the same perfect purity, simplicity, and orderly course of life. He seemed

destined by Providence to influence largely the character of the times in which he lived."

He returned, immediately on leaving Cambridge, to his mother's house in Newport, there to arrange his future plans; and the following letters will show at once the temper of his college life, and the feelings with which he adopted his profession. The first is one written many years later to a young friend, whom he hoped his own experience might aid.

"At your age I was poor, dependent, hardly able to buy clothes, but the great idea of *improvement* had seized upon me. I wanted to make the most of myself. I was not satisfied with knowing things superficially or by halves, but tried to get some comprehensive views of what I studied. I had an *end*, and, for a boy, a high end in view. I did not think of fitting myself for this or that particular pursuit, but for any to which events might call me. I now see that, had I had wiser direction, I might have done more; but I did something. The idea of carrying myself forward did a great deal for me. . . . . I never had an anxious thought about my lot in life. When I was poor, ill, and compelled to work with little strength, I left the future to itself. I was not buoyed up by any hopes of promotion. I wanted retirement, obscurity. My after distinction has indeed been forced on me. . . . .

"You are in danger of reading too fast. In studying history, I sometimes made an abstract from recollection, sometimes thought over what I had read. . . . . Walk out in the pleasant, still autumnal days. Such days did a great deal for my mind and heart, when I was in Cambridge. . . . .

"I want you to find immediate pleasure in the acquisition of knowledge, in the works of genius and art, in poetry, in beauty everywhere, and in vigorous action of the intellect. In youth it is not a good sign to inquire perpetually, What good will this or that study do? Our kind Creator then allures us to the useful, by joining an immediate satisfaction to studies or pursuits which refine or elevate us. . . . .

"Suppose a boy to choose to be a blacksmith, and to prepare himself for his business by exercising his arm perpetually, to the neglect of his other limbs and muscles, would he become another Vulcan? Would he not do more for himself by invigorating his whole system, and getting general health? You can easily apply this to the mind. What you want is to give tone, freedom, life to all your faculties, to get

a disposable strength of intellect, a power to use in whatever course you may pursue. A professional education, or one designed to fit you for a particular profession, would make but half a man of you. You are not to grow up merely for a particular occupation, but to perform all the duties of a man, to mix in society, to converse with intelligent men of all pursuits, to meet emergencies, to be prepared for new and unexpected situations. A general, liberal, generous education is what you need. Every study into which you throw your soul, in which you gain truth and exercise your faculties, is a preparation for your future course. I have found a good in everything I have learned. By degrees your destiny will open before you. You will learn what you are good for, what you are made for. I can say nothing more definite, and this is definite enough and full of animation. Do your duty, and you cannot fail to fit yourself for an honourable work."

The next is from his classmate, Arthur Maynard Walter, who died too early for his rare genius to be fully known and prized. It illustrates in an agreeable way the warmth of Mr. Channing's college friendships.

"I have just taken your letter from the office with all the fervour of a brother. I paid for it twenty-five cents., and would have paid twenty-five guineas, had I had them. It is full of the enthusiasm that I always admired in you, and occasioned all those indescribable sensations which arise from seeing opened to us the heart of a friend. I cannot agree to the present moral system of things. If we are to form connections at fourteen which are to be broken at eighteen,—connections which involve the best feelings of the soul, and which may affect in a great measure the future happiness or future misery of our lives,—we had better be without feeling, and live in a state of solitude. I have enjoyed no nights equal to those, when you used to call at my window, and I blew out the candle, and we went over to Shaw's. What nights those were! And the days, too, you well know. Our classic ground, Channing, I dare say, is overrun with weeds and with grass. The careless passer-by never thinks that every inch of ground was consecrated to affection, and every rock on which we sat, and every rail on which we leaned, had a value such as vulgar souls can never know. This is a theme on which I could dwell long."

The closeness of the bond which united these young friends is thus also testified to by Mr. Channing:—

"Newport, October, 1798.

"My dear Shaw,—I can clearly discover from ——'s last letter, that you doubt the sincerity and continuance of my friendship. Have you lived four years with me, and do you know so little of me as to think that time or any new attachment can tear from me the memory of 'joys that are past'? They are entwined with the threads of my existence; and it is only by rending these asunder, that you can destroy the melancholy recollection of our mutual happiness. I still remember your social fire,—how we collected round it,—shortened the long winter nights by nuts, cigars, and social converse, and strengthened the ties of our friendship. I was then supremely happy. I can still remember our walks by moonlight,—how we strolled over the common, or took the solitary road to the Judge's. We leaned on each other's arms for support; we grew warm in friendly argument; the jarrings which sometimes prevailed among us only sweetened the concord and harmony which succeeded. O William! the memory of those days will be ever fresh within me. It has drawn many tears down my cheek. I am sensible that my happy days have passed, and I can only weep for them. My walks now are solitary; no friendly voice to cheer me; no congenial soul to make a partner of my joy or sorrow. I am, indeed, in the midst of my family, with the best of mothers, brothers, and sisters. But, alas! I have no *friend.*

"There is a beach about a mile from the town. I never saw elsewhere such magnificence, grandeur, and sublimity, as the wild scenery of nature here presents. The towering and craggy rocks, the roar of the waves, the foam with which they dash on the shore, their irregular succession, and the boundless ocean before, all contribute to inspire one with awe and delight. Here I go once a day. Sometimes I compare my fortune to the billows before me. I extend my arms towards them, I run to meet them, and wish myself buried beneath their waters. Sometimes my whole soul ascends to the God of nature, and in such a temple I cannot but be devout. Thus I am either borne to heaven on 'rapture's wing of fire,' or else I am plunged into the depths of despair. How different from my situation at college! There I had friends to fly to, when the world looked gloomy, and forgot my miseries in the circle of my equals. Here I brood over melancholy.

"I am now on the point of changing my mode of life.

New prospects have dawned upon me. A field has opened for exertion. I mean to rouse all my energies, shake off this lassitude of soul, and lose my sorrows in business. God alone knows what success will attend me. I mean to do my *duty*, and I feel careless about the event. I love misfortunes when they spring from a resolute adherence to virtuous conduct. I trust that my burdens will be no heavier than I can bear, and I shall be cheered when I think that the struggles which I make are the struggles of honest industry.

"I suppose you know the profession which I mean to follow. Yes, Shaw, I shall be a minister, a shepherd of the flock of Jesus, a reformer of a vicious, and an instructor of an ignorant world. I look forward to a better country, and, while I am journeying toward it myself, I wish to lead others the same way. I know that you revere religion; and I wish that in your political career you would sometimes look beyond the strife, crimes, and intrigues of nations, to the harmony and blessedness of the Christian society in another state. We shall take different courses in life; but we shall meet in the grave. We shall bow before the same tribunal, and, I trust, shall rejoice for ever in the same heaven, and join in the same celebration of Almighty love. You will think I have grown quite ministerial, but, believe me, I cherished the same sentiments in college as I do now. In my view, religion is but another name for happiness, and I am most cheerful when I am most religious."

Chap. IV. — RICHMOND.

Æt. 18–20. 1798–1800.

Mr. Channing was now in his nineteenth year; and feeling that his friends had done all for him that was in their power, and yet more, that the whole of his mother's small income was needed for the family, he determined to secure some means of maintenance while pursuing his professional studies. His state of mind he thus discloses to his uncle:—"I am happy to hear that you approve of the step I have taken. It has always been a favourite wish of my heart to support myself. Bitter is the bread of dependence. All I had a right to expect from my friends was an education. This I have obtained, and I trust that Heaven will smile on my exertions."

He was most happy, therefore, to receive an invitation from David Meade Randolph, Esq., of Richmond, Virginia, who was then on a visit at Newport, and was struck with the young man's intelligence, refinement, and liberal spirit, to reside in his family, as tutor; and in October of 1798, he left Newport for the South.

How much his family mourned this necessary separation appears by the following extracts from a letter of his brother Francis, then residing as a lawyer at Newport. "William has gone, and most of my joys have gone with him. You know not the worth of this 'amiable and almost divine fellow,' as one of his classmates calls him. Where shall I find his equal? In vain do I search the whole round of my acquaintance. So pure a mind, united with so noble a spirit, and such exquisite feelings, I nowhere discern." To his mother, especially, his departure was a source of the deepest sorrow. And to this overflowing affection he thus touchingly alludes in the first letter after his arrival.

"November, 1798.

"My dear Mother,—A favourable opportunity has just offered, by which I can write to all my friends without subjecting them to the expense of postage. I begin with you. To you I owe the highest obligations. The anxiety and tenderness which you discovered at my departure from Newport will never be forgotten. I wish that my friends were not so deeply interested in my welfare. It makes both them and me unhappy. Every misfortune I experience is aggravated by thinking on the pain which it will occasion them. I often wish that I had been thrown loose on the wide ocean of life, without one eye to watch with friendly care my various successes, or shed a tear over my follies and miseries. When I was dashing over the billows, on my passage, I felt no fear for myself; but I was distressed when I remembered that I had left a mother behind me who was trembling with anxiety lest her son might be buried in the merciless waves. I understand from Francis's letter, that you had many high winds after I left you; and did not every gale come to me loaded with the sighs of a mother? I mention this because I wish you not to make yourself unhappy by your concern for me. I know that I am far from home, where nothing but your good wishes can reach me. I am far from your social fireside. I am neither a sharer in your joys, nor the object of your fond attentions. But still the same sun shines

upon us, the same providence is extended to both of us, and the same God who protects and blesses you, will watch over me, and mete me out a portion of happiness. Our distance from each other cannot remove either of us from our common Parent. It is this truth which consoles me in my absence from home, and I wish that it might banish from your bosom those corroding fears for my safety, which, added to the load of your domestic cares, must make life wearisome to you. I feel every day more and more attached to my new abode. I am treated with every attention which hospitality can bestow. My duties are neither numerous nor irksome, and I can find time enough for study. I am resolved to prosecute divinity. My highest hopes of happiness are beyond the grave, and I cannot do more good to mankind than by teaching them also to lay up treasures where neither moth nor rust can corrupt them. My dear mother, though I have so lately left you, I begin already to anticipate the moment when I shall see you again. Time has swifter wings than the eagle. Months and years will fly away,—and with what rapture shall I press you all to my bosom! Hope is the anchor of the soul. I lean upon it perpetually. I paint more blissful scenes in prospect than I have ever yet experienced; and should they prove as baseless as the fabric of a vision, I can still boast of the happiness which they give in anticipation. I dare not ask, but I should like to receive, a few lines from you. "Your affectionate son."

In Mr. Randolph's family Mr. Channing resided as an honoured guest, and found there a circle of warm friends. Mr. Randolph was at this time the Marshal of the United States for Virginia, and his house was frequented by the most eminent citizens of Richmond and of the State, first among whom to be mentioned with honour was the late Chief Justice Marshall, who was then in the full vigour of his manhood, and commanded universal respect for his uprightness, wisdom, and dignity of presence. How much a young man of Mr. Channing's energy appreciated opportunities so rare, for enlarging his experience and acquaintance with mankind, can be readily understood. He visited freely in Richmond, availed himself of the hospitalities offered by the neighbouring gentry, and on various occasions passed periods of leisure at plantations, besides travelling with the Randolphs in the summer season. Virginia was at this time still in her pros-

perity, and scarcely beginning to reap the penalty which slavery has since brought, in blasted fields, deserted mansions, ruined estates, and scattered families; and Mr. Channing felt deeply the charm of the cordial and elegant courtesy which everywhere greeted him. With more enthusiasm certainly than discrimination, he wrote to his brother:—

"I believe I have before told you that the manners of the Virginians are more free than ours. There is one circumstance which particularly pleases me. The men do not forget the friendship and feelings of their youth. They call each other by their Christian names. They address each other and converse together with the same familiarity and frankness which they used to do when they were boys. How different from our Northern manners! There, avarice and ceremony at the age of twenty graft the coldness and unfeelingness of age on the disinterested ardour of youth."

And again, to Mr. Shaw, he says,—

"I believe I have praised the Virginians before, in my letters, for their hospitality. I blush for my own people, when I compare the selfish prudence of a Yankee with the generous confidence of a Virginian. Here I find great vices, but greater virtues than I left behind me. There is one single trait which attaches me to the people I live with, more than all the virtues of New England. They *love money less* than we do. They are more disinterested. Their patriotism is not tied to their purse strings. Could I only take from the Virginians their *sensuality* and their *slaves*, I should think them the greatest people in the world. As it is, Shaw, with a few great virtues, they have innumerable vices."

But pleasing social relations did not deaden his conscience, as in the case of others they have too often done, to the iniquity and miseries of slavery. He saw the institution, it is true, under its most lenient form; for the Randolphs were as humane as it is possible to be in relations so intrinsically unjust, and sought to reconcile their slaves to their situation, and to gain their attachment, by gentleness and kind attentions. Indeed, to judge from passages in Mrs. Randolph's letters to Mr. Channing after his return from Virginia, she was, and perhaps her husband also, disgusted with the whole system; for she writes, in relation to the threatened insurrection in Richmond, "Such is our boasted land of freedom," —Mr. Randolph adding, "This is a small tornado of liberty."

In a later letter she thus still more strongly expresses herself: "I feel a great desire to quit the land of slavery altogether." It is very probable, then, that in the family where he resided the evils of this lowest form of society were fully exposed and discussed.* "I heard it freely spoken of with abhorrence," he says. And wherever he went, language of similar hostility may well have reached him; for the words of Washington and of Jefferson were sounding in the ears of their fellow-citizens, and men had not then become insensible to the absurd and hypocritical position in which the United States were presented to the world,—as a nation professing freedom and practising oppression, asserting equality and enforcing castes, declaring itself in advance of the whole civilized world by a recognition of inalienable human rights, and yet perpetuating the worn-out usages of barbarism. Not then, either, had speculators discovered how to postpone the destructive effects of slave cultivation, by breeding children, like cattle, for the Southwest market, and replenishing exhausted coffers by the profits of the "vigintial crop." Virginia had already, to be sure, voted for the abolition of the foreign slave-trade, with the economical prospect of becoming the American Guinea-coast, and monopolizing the gains of merchandise in men. But the stimulants to this accursed traffic, offered by the acquisition of Louisiana and Florida, by the rapid growth of the cotton-trade, and the invention of the cotton-gin, were not then felt. And Mr. Channing probably received, therefore, from intelligent slave-holders confessions of their dissatisfaction with this system of concentrated inhumanity. He came, also, personally in contact with its workings, by sometimes assuming the duty of distributing the weekly rations, by visiting in the slave-huts, and conversing with the domestics in the household; and he was once left by Mr. and Mrs. Randolph, during a short absence, in entire charge of these beings made helpless by constraint and dependence. The result of this experience was, that he received an indelible impression of the wretchedness which such wrongs must everywhere and for ever bring alike on slave and master. The following letter fully expresses the state of his feelings:—

"There is one object here which always depresses me. It is *slavery*. This alone would prevent me from ever settling in Virginia. Language cannot express my detesta-

* Works, Vol. II., p. 231.

tion of it. Master and slave! Nature never made such a distinction, or established such a relation. Man, when forced to substitute the will of another for his own, ceases to be a moral agent; his title to the name of man is extinguished, he becomes a mere machine in the hands of his oppressor. No empire is so valuable as the empire of one's self. No right is so inseparable from humanity, and so necessary to the improvement of our species, as the right of exerting the powers which nature has given us in the pursuit of any and of every good which we can obtain without doing injury to others. Should you desire it, I will give you some idea of the situation and character of the negroes in Virginia. It is a subject so degrading to humanity, that I cannot dwell on it with pleasure. I should be obliged to show you every vice, heightened by every meanness and added to every misery. The influence of slavery on the whites is almost as fatal as on the blacks themselves."

The strong Federal predilections which Mr. Channing brought with him from the North, and the earnest discussions which he found prevailing in Virginia, gave a deepened interest to his intercourse with leading men, and doubtless exerted an influence to call his powers into their fullest action. In Newport, and at college, he had been accustomed to hear only one side of the important questions, which then stirred the country, presented; but now he found himself confronted with Democrats, and was forced to meet their arguments face to face. To a friend he writes:—

"I am very desirous to see the debates in Congress. I find this advantage from being in Virginia, that I must adopt no opinion on the measures of government without having grounds for it."

This was the period, it will be remembered, when the Federalists were still dreading the influence of French Jacobinism, and when the democrats saw in their opponents the tools of English intrigue, when the black cockade and the tricolour were worn as badges by the respective parties, and when the most bitter suspicion and calumny everywhere prevailed. It was well for a high-spirited and honourable young man to be brought thus into close contact with persons of an opposite creed from that in which he had been reared. It disarmed his prejudices, enlarged his views of public affairs, substituted candour for bigotry, and taught him to consult

reason more than his passions. Indeed, so far did he learn to be just in stating the arguments of his adversaries, that his brother writes to him reproachfully, as if he had become a traitor. But his liberality was only the first development of that many-sidedness and cautious judgment which were so characteristic of his manhood. He was still a devoted Federalist, as appears from the following letters to his friend Shaw, which are of value at once as an illustration of the temper of the times, and as a proof of his mental energy.

"My political opinions have varied a little since I saw you; but it would be unfair to charge them to the Jacobinic atmosphere of Virginia. I trust that I am guided by sober reflection. I view the world as a wide field of action, designed by its Framer to perfect the human character. Political institutions are valuable only as they improve and morally elevate human nature. Wealth and power are subordinate considerations, and are far from constituting the real greatness of a state. I blush for mankind, when I see *interest* the only tie which binds them to their country; when I see the social compact improved for no purpose but the accumulation of riches, and the prosperity of a nation decided by the successful avarice of its members. I wish to see *patriotism* exalted into a *moral principle*, not a branch of avarice. I wish to see governments established and administered with the view of enlightening the mind and dignifying the heart.

"I have premised these observations, that you may be prepared for some remarks in the following pages which might otherwise surprise you. You wish to know what I think of France. I think her cause desperate indeed. The republic has not many months to live. Enthusiasm and numbers have hitherto crowned her with success; but enthusiasm and numbers have failed her. 'Her soldiers no longer burn with the ardour of freemen, and their ranks are thinned by the sword.' Her citizens are discontented; her conquered provinces are rising in arms against her; and government finds no resources but in fleecing to the last farthing the miserable subjects whom former rapacity had reduced to poverty. The republic is split into parties, and her naval defeats have leagued all Europe against her. This I collect from newspapers. Now I cannot conceive how a government, founded on corruption, unsupported by the attachment of its subjects, unable to pay its armies, shaken by internal convulsions, sur-

rounded by rebellious allies, and attacked, as France soon must be, by the united forces of Europe, can maintain its ground, and withstand such formidable and consolidated opposition. If my information is correct, I cannot but think that the great nation is in a more critical situation than ever; and this idea has led me to suppose, in spite of the secretary's report, that she was sincere in her pacific professions to Mr. Gerry.

"Do not misunderstand me, Shaw. I do not say that France has given up her views on this country; I do not say that she is less active in her intrigues. I know better. What I mean is this—that France rested her hopes of success on the party she had formed in our own bosom, that she never calculated upon that spirit which burst forth on the publication of the despatches, that her critical situation rendered a war with us impolitic, and that it was of course her interest to heal the breach with us, and wait for a more favourable opportunity to accomplish her designs. Mr. Pickering tells us, that France wished to delude us by the semblance of a negotiation, and palsy our exertions. No doubt, she wished us to repose in the lap of confidence, till, having 'sharked up the fry of Europe,' she should have leisure to devour us also. But how, in fact, was this to be done? She had evidently been too sudden in claiming tribute from America; she saw that, in spite of her opiates, the eagle's eye was vigilant, and 'the national pulse beat high for war;' she saw unexpected energies of patriotism bursting forth, and measures of defence adopted, notwithstanding her tampering with our envoy. She had no navy to force us to compliance; and thus situated, I ask you, what was she to do? Was it not her interest to quiet our jealousies by forming a treaty with us, and delay to another and more promising period her schemes of bondage? Was not this the way to enable her infernal agents to work more securely against us, and poison the public mind with more success? These arguments appear to me of considerable weight; and though Mr. Gerry seems to be no Solomon in his correspondence, I am disposed on this subject to subscribe to his opinion.

"From considering France, I am naturally led to make some observations on the defensive steps which have been taken, and which, it is said, will be taken by our government. You may call me Jacobin, if you please, but I am *not* for enlarging our *standing army*. I wish there was nothing of

the kind. It is the engine which has beat down the walls of liberty in all ages; and though I anticipate no dangers from the present one, still it is a precedent which may be fatally abused.

"I am opposed to standing armies on account of their *moral effects*. The activity of war leaves the soldier little time to corrupt himself. But an army in time of peace is the hot-bed of vice. Common soldiers are mostly taken from the dregs of society. Every farthing of their pay is spent in drinking. Example hurries along the honest and virtuous. Idleness vitiates them. They communicate their crimes to the neighbourhood in which they are quartered; and I do not think that Mr. Giles was too severe when he said, that, 'for five dollars' worth of whisky, they would, every man of them, sacrifice their country, and sell its liberties.' A soldier *by profession* is too apt to forget that he is a *citizen*. Subject to the absolute command of his superior officer, he loses the dignity of a freeman, and looks with contempt on subordination to civil authority. I have no time to write further. I meant to have said something on the alliance with England, which Paine is talking about; but I must defer it. Write soon; correct me if I am wrong. You will find that my political principles and ideas of government are branches of my moral system. You do not know what an enthusiast I have grown for *liberty*."*

"I feel vexed almost to madness, when I see the powers of Europe sitting so quietly till the chains are riveted on them. I expected ere this to have seen every nation, from the Mediterranean to the Baltic, in arms against this scourge of society. But instead of that, the idle controversies of Rastadt are protracted, while Naples is given up to pillage, and France is gaining the command of the Rhine. . . . . I think that the *great nation* has nothing to fear now but from the distressed state of her finances, and I suppose the plunder of Naples will fill her coffers for the present. The moment for action has been lost. Switzerland, Belgium, and Holland discovered the symptoms of a rebellion—then was the time to strike a blow.

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"War, in its mildest forms, is horrible. As waged by the Russians (alluding to Suwarrow), it is the heaviest curse

* This letter was written a year subsequent to the one which follows, but is placed before it, as it best introduces his political sentiments.

which can fall to the lot of man. If rivers of blood have already been shed, we must now expect oceans. God of Peace! how long wilt thou leave thy children a prey to all the horrors of war? We have read so long of battles, that they have become familiar to us. We hear of the slaughter of thousands and ten thousands, with as little emotion as if we had been told that so many flies had been swept away in a storm. But is war on this account less calamitous? Do you remember the picture of *Horror* which Southey gives us in a note to one of his odes? I shuddered at it. I saw the milk frozen on the breast of the dead mother. I saw the babe hanging on her cold bosom. I am indeed sick of war; my prayer to God is, 'Thy kingdom come,' a kingdom which the Prince of Peace will govern.

. . . . . .

"What need for this hurry about a treaty with France? A few months may make our way plain before us. Will you say that a refusal to meet the offers of France will furnish the Jacobins with arms against the administration? Shaw, if this hellish Cerberus, Jacobinism, could be soothed by throwing it a sop of honey, I would willingly consent to it. But, believe me, you must show it the golden branch, too, before you can stop its barkings. While John Adams is president, they know that the 'loaves and fishes' of office will not fall to their lot. Hence they will growl; and hinder them if you can. It is of little consequence whether the government is administered this way or that; Jacobins will find fault. Besides, if the president can really wish to silence them, he ought to have sent the envoys long ago. Whence this tedious delay? Should he send them now, the Jacobins will continue to rail at him for not sending them sooner. I have thus offered a few reflections on the much agitated subject of our envoy. Answer me soon, and show me my error, if I have embraced one.

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"If I mistake not, the present period is the most eventful and important which has offered itself to our view during the whole revolution of France. In Europe, the fate of nations is suspended in the balance; and America, though so remote from the scene of blood and confusion, is most deeply interested in the decision of the contest. The eyes of all parties are now fixed on the president. What can he do? The Federalists in all parts of the country seem opposed to a

renewal of negotiation with France. The Jacobins are more clamorous than ever about his supineness in forming a solid peace with that government. . . . . I rely implicitly on the firmness and independence of the president. I consider him as elevated above the clamours of faction, and superior to the narrow views of party. He is placed in so peculiar a situation, that no measure he can adopt will be popular. The only object he can propose to himself is the good of his country; and, I doubt not, he will pursue it with undeviating perseverance. I have ever considered it, and shall consider it, the interest of America to be at peace with all nations. Let me ask you, then, what influence the proposed negotiation will have on maintaining the peace of our country. This is the most interesting light in which it can be viewed; and it is my sincere opinion that it will tend rather to embroil us with the rest of Europe, than to establish a lasting peace with France. . . . . .

"What will the rest of Europe think of us for making a treaty with France, when all other civilized nations have dissolved their connexions with her? Have they not openly expressed their resolution to overthrow that government with which we are going to treat? Think not, Shaw, that I wish to see our government overawed by foreign threats. I would hurl them back with indignation. I only ask, whether it would not be better to sit still for awhile, until affairs in Europe have assumed a more settled form.

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"Marshall stands at the head of the list, and I do but echo the multitude, when I tell you that he is one of the greatest men in the country. His 'Answers to a Freeholder' had a tendency to sink him in the estimation of the Northern people. But if you lived in Virginia, you would think just as he did. I blush when I think of the Alien and Sedition laws. They have only served to show the weakness of government. They were worse than useless. Marshall is a great character. He bids fair to be the first character in the Union.

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"I wonder how —— could presume to touch the venerable laurels of Washington. Did not Washington distinguish himself before and after the time of Lord Howe's command? Did he not show the most consummate skill in improving the advantages which Lord Howe afforded him? Witness

Princeton and Trenton. Let any man read Washington's own letters; and if he will afterwards say that Washington is not a first-rate general, I will yield the point.

"When I read ——'s justification of France in breaking the treaty, I began to think that he had taken a few lessons in the school of French philosophy. I think it worthy of the president of the Directory, and I dare say that, if he would communicate it to that honourable body, they would decree him a place with Condorcet and other '*philosophists*' in the Pantheon. I wonder what —— will assert next. The rankest Jacobin could not have crowded more offensive matter into the few lines which constitute the extract from his letter.

"I rejoice with you, my friend, at the victory of Nelson. I hope the report is equally true respecting the defeat of Bonaparte's land forces. The Directory, in their last communication, have carried him safe to Cairo; should it be true that he has repelled all human opposition, I would invoke old Nilus from the ooze of his fertilizing streams, and beseech him to overflow with his swiftest torrents the land he has long enriched, and sweep this prince of robbers from the face of the earth. There is one question which has arisen in my mind since the late news from the Mediterranean, and I think it an important one. Ought not a just policy to be alarmed at the disproportionate greatness and power of the British navy? There is not at present a nation in Europe to dispute with her the empire of the seas. We are exulting at the superiority of the British by sea, as we did a few years ago at the superiority of the French by land. We have bitterly rued the latter. Let us avoid the same error with respect to the former. I wish France to fall, but I do not wish England to rise on her ruins. We should be careful that, in destroying one scourge of the world, we do not give birth to another.

"I am happy to hear that the same odium is everywhere attached to the name of Jacobin. This is the case even in Democratic Virginia. A *Jacobin* is synonymous with a dishonest, immoral, factious, and disorganizing man. There are many doubts here respecting Mr. Marshall's election. I think that he will succeed. Mr. Marshall has been much censured at the Northward for his sentiments on the Alien and Sedition laws. I begin to believe that he is right. He says that they are not unconstitutional. But they have pro-

duced an amazing irritation in the public mind. The opposition in Congress were gradually losing their influence with the people in this part of America. The conduct of France was too flagrant to be justified, and her warmest partisans were obliged to confess that the executive had pursued towards her a liberal and pacific policy. Public opinion was becoming rectified. But the Alien and Sedition laws gave new life to the enemies of government, and blew the dying spark into a flame. You no longer hear government charged with ingratitude to France. This the Jacobins take care to throw in the background. They bring forward the Alien and Sedition laws into the front of the scene; and so successful have they been in exciting alarms, that there are thousands who think their liberties endangered and the constitution violated. You would suppose, from their language, that they were all in chains, that they were bent down to the ground with the load of their oppressions,—that Congress, like the democratic negro-drivers of Virginia, were standing over them with a lash in their hands, and scourging them till exhausted nature was spending her last breath in complaint. I have no doubt but a petition will be forwarded to Congress, by the legislature of this State, for a repeal of these odious Acts.

"And now, I would ask, what good effects have these laws produced? Is the imprisonment of Lyon, or the arrest of three or four printers, an object to be placed in competition with the union of our country? The Alien law never has been, and probably never will be, carried into execution. The Sedition law has had no effect where it is most wanted. A printer in this city published seditious matter the very day before the Circuit Court sat here, in hopes of a prosecution; and the friends of government passed it by, on account of the irritation it would produce, and because they knew that such a prosecution would recommend him to the legislature for printer to the State. I wish government to possess energy as much as any man; but I believe that it is weakened, instead of being strengthened, by pretending to energy which it cannot support. Is not the tendency of this to bring it into contempt, to render its measures weak and ineffectual? Is it not, in fine, much better to say nothing about sedition, when we cannot, or dare not, repress it? I consider, my friend, that a crisis is rapidly approaching. The question must soon be decided, whether the Federal government shall

stand or fall. I understand that one court in this State has already set aside the Stamp Act as unconstitutional, and proceeded to business without it. There is no doubt, but that the legislature, which meets in this town next Tuesday, will take some steps for the repeal of the Alien and Sedition laws; and a gentleman, who read some resolves in the Jacobin Gazette of yesterday, has just informed me that one county have expressed their determination of standing by the legislature, in whatever measures they may adopt upon this occasion.

"For my part, I care not how soon the contest is decided. Should the worst happen, should my native country be prostrated, by the arts and influence of demagogues, at the feet of France, I will curse and quit it. I never will breathe the same air with those who are tainted with the foul impurities of French principles. I never will dwell in the country where I was born free, when it is doomed to groan under a foreign yoke. With tears in my eyes, I will bid farewell to the roof which sheltered my infancy, and to the green graves of my fathers, and take up my abode in the foreign land from which I boast of my descent, and which my honest ancestors left in hopes of finding climes more favourable to liberty and to the rights of man."

Mr. Channing's interest in public affairs, knowledge of national policy, and observation of men were yet more enlarged, while his powers of eloquence received a stimulant, from attending the debates of the Virginia legislature, which held its sessions in the capitol at Richmond. He writes,— "I have listened to these speeches with a great deal of pleasure. The Virginians are the best orators I have ever heard."

But zeal in the political movements of the day, and social enjoyments, occupied only the intervals of time. His energies were mainly turned to the duties of his school and to private studies. He had under his charge twelve boys, to whose care most of the hours of the day were devoted. In after years, he thought himself at this time too strict a disciplinarian. But he may have found a display of decision more necessary from his youth and smallness of size, of which an amusing illustration is given in the following anecdote, related by himself. An old coloured woman came into the school to complain of some of the boys who had damaged her

garden, broken her fence, and torn up her flowers, making loud complaint, and wanting to see the master. When he presented himself, she surveyed him for a moment, and said, —"*You de massa?* You little ting, you can't lick 'em; dey put you out de window." He assured her, however, that the boys should be corrected, and that she should be satisfied for her loss, remarking,—"Poor mamma! she knew of no way of discipline but the *lash*."

Absorbed in the duty of teaching during the day, and living much apart from the family, Mr. Channing was prompted by his wish for quick advancement to pass most of the night in study. He usually remained at his desk till two or three o'clock in the morning, and often saw the day break before retiring to rest. He had also gained from the Stoics, and from his own pure standard of virtue, ascetic desires of curbing the animal nature, and of hardening himself for difficult duties. For the end of overcoming effeminacy, he accustomed himself to sleep on the bare floor, and would spring up at any hour of waking to walk about in the cold. With the same view, he made experiments in diet, and was rigidly abstemious, while he neglected exercise from too close application. The result of these night-studies, and of his general ignorance of the natural laws, was, that an originally fine constitution was broken, and seeds of disease were planted in his system, which years of scrupulous regard to health could never root out.

To these sources of illness was added another, which, as it illustrates his characteristic disinterestedness, may deserve a passing notice. When he left home, his provident mother had given him a bill of credit on a house in Richmond, with the confident expectation that he would use it to refurnish his wardrobe. Money, however, he could not bring himself to take from his mother's large family, and never drew upon his friends. Depression of spirits and absorption of mind made him careless, also, of external appearances; and he preferred to expend his salary in purchasing books. The consequence was, that his clothing became much worn, and he exposed himself during the whole winter without an overcoat, except when sometimes he borrowed one to attend church. These necessities came *home* to him, when, upon Christmas-day, he found himself too meanly clad to join the gay party assembled at Mr. Randolph's, and, sitting alone in his study, thought of his own family circle, then gathered,

far away, around his mother's table. He thus alludes, years afterwards, to his home-sickness:—

"I am not sorry that you have had a touch of this disease. I know it well. I remember how my throat seemed full, and food was tasteless, and the solitude which I fled to was utter loneliness. It is worse than sea-sickness, but it comes from the heart; it is a tribute to the friends you have left."

This slight experience of poverty, too, sank deep into his memory, and gave him through life most tender compassion for the needy.

His general state and habits he thus describes:—

"My dear fellow,—. . . . . Did you but know the exquisite happiness which the handwriting of a friend affords me, now that I am so far from home, without one companion of my youth to cheer my social, or share my gloomy, hours, I am sure you would snatch a few moments from sleep, or the round of amusements, to scribble me a letter.

"You seem anxious to know how I am situated. Very happily, I assure you; as happily as I could be at such a distance from Newport. I finish school before dinner, and all the rest of the day I spend as I choose. I am treated with every attention I can desire. I have a retired room for my study, a lonely plain to walk in, and you know, Shaw, that under these circumstances I cannot be miserable. I often look towards the North with a sigh, and think of the scenes I have left behind me. But I remember that cruel necessity has driven me from home, and wipe away the tear which the painful recollection had wrung from my eyes. Do not misunderstand me, Shaw. When I say *cruel necessity*, I do not mean *poverty*. No! It is a necessity which my feelings have imposed upon me,—a necessity arising from a change in my sentiments, and a peculiarity of character which I cannot explain to you. It is now that I experience the benefit of habits which I formed in early life. O Heaven! what a wretch should I be, how wearisome would be existence, had I not learned to depend on myself for enjoyment! Society becomes more and more insipid. I am tired of the fashionable nonsense which dins my ear in every circle, and I am driven to my book and pen for relief and pleasure. With my book and pen in my hand, I am always happy. Nature or education has given this bent to my mind, and I esteem it as the richest blessing Heaven ever sent me. I am independent of the world. Above all things, cultivate this

independence. You know it is my idol, and I know of no virtue more necessary to a politician."

The studies to which he was assiduously devoting himself were partly of a general character, as appears from the following letters to his friend Shaw, describing his literary pursuits:—

"I have not yet received an answer to my last two letters. But I abhor ceremony; and when I have an hour's leisure and a full heart, I cannot enjoy myself better than in communicating my sentiments and feelings to a friend. I am now totally immersed in literature. I have settled a course of reading for three years, and I hope at the end of that time to have knowledge enough to enter on the world. I intend to pursue a course of modern history immediately. I have purchased a set of Russell, and shall take Belsham's George the Third for a continuation. I shall gain more particular knowledge of the distinguished reigns by the help of biographies. I have understood that Harte's Gustavus is a good work. What do you know of it? If it is worth reading, and not too voluminous, could you forward it to me? What do you think of Gillie's Frederick? I can procure it here, if you recommend it. I have already Voltaire's Louis the Fourteenth. Would you advise Sully's Memoirs in this course? I shall begin Russell at Henry the Seventh of England. I have read all of Hume but the last volume. He does not throw light enough on the rest of Europe. Tell me what books must be added, and what retrenched. I wish I could get a good Roman and a good Grecian history. I know of none which is political enough, and which attends to the private life of those nations. Ferguson will carry me to the termination of the Roman Republic. But must I wade through Gibbon to get acquainted with the Empire? Rather than do this, I will wait till I begin a course of ecclesiastical history. What do you know of Mitford's Greece? I shall now read history very differently from what I used to do. I shall read it as a politician and a moralist. I shall found my opinions of government on what I see to be the effects of different systems, and not on idle speculation. I study harder than ever. I have just been reading Priestley's Lectures, and have derived considerable advantage from them. I admire, above all, Ferguson's Civil Society. You lost a treasure, Shaw, when you sold it to me. Do you know anything of Ferguson's other political work? I forget the title

of it. What merit has Robertson's North America? Is he, like the sun, more majestic in his setting?"

Of Robertson's Charles the Fifth, also, which he at this period read, he once remarked:—

"That history first gave me a right direction in historical matters. The introduction is superficial; but to me, in my ignorance, it was full of light, and taught the value of *broad views* of human affairs; it led me to look for the steady causes and tendencies at work among nations. On the whole, Robertson gives a pretty fair view of the Reformation,—that mighty event,—though, indeed, he was a Protestant, and no Protestant can be wholly impartial."

Speaking of ——'s poem, he says:—

"In ancient times, it was a common opinion, that Parnassus was hard to climb, and its top almost inaccessible. But in modern times, we seem to have made a beaten cart-way over it, and where is the man who cannot travel it without difficulty or danger? Helicon was once represented as a scanty stream, and happy was he who could get a draught of it. But now it has become so bold a river, that every plough-boy in the field of science can water his horses at it. Inspiration descends in the form of a thick fog, and the beclouded fancy which paints a monster, while it aims at sketching nature, is admired for the boldness and wildness of its thoughts. . . . . .

"His metaphors, generally speaking, are too far-fetched. He shows more of the scholar than the man, and none but a scholar can understand his productions. He pleases the refined taste of the critic, but cannot strike the master-springs of the human heart. . . . . His poetry is loaded with cumbrous epithets. He dazzles us with his splendour, but he does not warm us with the blaze of his genius. Like a glittering sword brandished in a sunbeam, he flashes light into your eyes, without communicating any of the heat of that luminary. I love an author who converges the rays of thought till they burn in a focus.

"The ancients heaped flowers on the dead, but gave a simple garland of oak to the living hero. I admire their taste. Let the servile imitator deck his lifeless page with a profusion of epithets. They keep the corpse out of sight. But genius can give the spark of life, the bloom of health, the lightning eye, the majesty of form, and the glow of

thought, to her productions. What need, then, of ornament?" . . . . .

"I have lately read Mrs. Wolstonecraft's posthumous works. Her letters, toward the end of the first volume, are the best I ever read. They are superior to Sterne's. I consider that woman as the greatest of the age. Her 'Rights of Woman' is a masculine performance, and ought to be studied by the sex. *Can* you call her a prostitute? She indeed formed a guilty connexion. But even then she acted upon principle. . . . . .

"It seems that you cannot love Mrs. Wolstonecraft. I do not mean to fight with you about her. Her principles respecting marriage would prove fatal to society, if they were reduced to practice. These I cannot recommend. But on other subjects her sentiments are noble, generous, and sublime. She possessed a masculine mind, but in her letters you may discover a heart as soft and feeling as was ever placed in the breast of a woman. I only know her by her writings. . . . . .

"I have been reading Rousseau's Eloise. What a writer! Rousseau is the only French author I have ever read, who knows the way to the heart.

"I would also recommend to you a novel, Caleb Williams, by Godwin. Shaw, what a melancholy reflection is it that the writers I have now mentioned were all deists! Blest with the powers of intellect and fancy, they have not been able to discern the traces of a God in his Holy Scriptures, and have trodden under foot the only treasure which deserved pursuit. The pride of human nature has been the source of their error. They could not 'become as little children.' They could not bear the yoke of Christ, imbibe the meek and humble spirit of his religion, and rely upon his merits for pardon and acceptance with God."

But while earnestly occupied in political speculations, and in historical and literary pursuits,—thus already manifesting the varied mental activity which marked him in mature life,—other characteristic tendencies appeared. The poetic temperament that had led him to the beach in Newport, and to the willow walk in Cambridge,—thrilling his soul with the sense of beauty, with yearnings to be free from imperfection, and visions of good too great for earth,—was working strongly in him now. On the banks of the James river, dotted with islets of most brilliant emerald,—under the

shadows of deep groves, where century-old sycamores reared their tall, white trunks like cathedral columns, — among arbours formed by the gnarled grape-vines which twined their heavy folds over trees crushed down by their weight, where the bright, polished leaves of the holly glistened, and the gum and the maple spread out their various-tinted verdure, and the tulip-tree raised its pyramid of orange-green blossoms to the sun,—he passed hours and days of delightful wandering, lost in soft dreams and rapturous visions. In one letter he says :—

"I wish that you had been with me, Shaw! Arm in arm, we would have strolled over the fields, and gazed with admiration on the surrounding scenery. A few traces of cultivation varied the prospect, and all besides was wild and luxuriant. Nature still triumphed—still reposed on her bed of leaves under the shade of the oak and pine. Our house was delightfully situated on the top of a little hill. Before us spread a valley clothed with corn and tobacco crops. Beyond it rose two mountains. The passing clouds rested on their summits, and one continued forest covered their sides, extending down to the plain below. . . . . .

"We would often rest under the vine or the peach-tree, fill our bosoms with clusters of wild grapes, wipe the down from the delicious fruit, and slake our thirst at the friendly rivulet which murmured by our feet. I assure you I have had a charming time. I love the country. As you have but little work to do, you hardly know what is the meaning of the word holiday. View me, pent up in a school for eight months, and then let loose in the fields, free as the air I breathe, and emancipated from the frivolous punctilios and galling forms of society. I snuff up the fresh breezes; I throw myself on the soft bed of grass which Nature has formed for her favourites; I feel every power within me renewed and invigorated. . . . . .

"You told me, some time ago, that you had broken off the habit of musing. I wish I could say the same. You cannot conceive how much of my time, especially at this season, is thrown away in pursuing the phantoms of a disordered imagination. Musing wears away my body and my mind. I walk without attending to the distance. Sometimes joy gives me wings, or else, absorbed in melancholy, I drag one foot heavily after the other for whole hours

together. I try to read, but I only repeat words, without receiving an idea from them. Do give me a recipe for curing this disorder."

Later in life, too, in counselling a young friend, he thus alludes to his own early habits:—

"Do anything innocent, rather than give yourself up to *reverie*. I can speak on this point from experience. At one period of my life I was a dreamer, castle-builder. Visions of the distant and future took the place of present duty and activity. I spent hours in reverie. I suppose I was seduced in part by physical debility; but the body suffered as much as the mind. I found, too, that the imagination threatened to inflame the passions, and that, if I meant to be virtuous, I must dismiss my musings. The conflict was a hard one. I resolved, prayed, resisted, sought refuge in occupation, and at length triumphed. I beg you to avail yourself of my experience.

"It is true that every soul has its own warfare to go through, but still we may help one another. At your age, there is often a great and sudden development of the sensibilities. The imagination is stirred up by the hope of a vast and undefined good, by prospects of the uncertain and boundless future, and plunges into reverie. The present is too narrow for us. We know not what we want. Sometimes a secret restlessness devours the young, a mysterious fever of the spirit. We must not wonder at this. Our nature has mighty energies, and they are given to us, if I may so say, in a rude state, that we may reduce them to harmony. The young mind, when roused to life and power, is at first very much a chaos. Some at this critical period abandon themselves to sensual excesses, in hope of seizing that intense good which they thirst for. Some give themselves up to secret musings, and seek in unreal worlds what the actual world cannot give. Happy the young man who at this moment seizes on some views, however faint, of the true and great end of his being; who is conscious, amidst his wild thoughts, that he has within himself a power of forming himself to something pure, noble, divine; who sympathizes with the generous, disinterested, heroic; who feels that he must establish an empire over himself, or be lost. The idea of perfection is of necessity revealed to us at first very imperfectly; but if we seize it with faith in the possibility of

realizing it, of rising to something higher than we are, and if faith give birth to resolution, then our youth, with all its tumults and vehemence, is full of promise."

And again:—

"Have you been searching into your own motives, affections, powers, secret processes? This may be most useful. if we study ourselves, not from self-idolatry, not under the notion that we deserve all our power of thought, but that we may learn our common mysterious nature, may learn something of all souls, may learn our end, and may raise our standard of judgment and action. But perhaps you have been employed with yourself in the sense of meditating anxiously and jealously on your defects, or of fashioning in reverie your own future lot. These are both bad occupations. I wasted a good deal of my early life in reverie, and broke the habit only by painful self-conflict. I felt that my powers were running wild, and my religious principles were infinitely important to me in giving me the victory. The best escape from this habit is found in interesting occupation, of an earnest, absorbing nature, and an innocent cheering society. I have suffered, too, from a painful sense of defects; but, on the whole, have been too wise to waste in idle lamentations of deficiencies the energy which should be used in removing them."

And, finally, his romantic enthusiasm is thus laid fully bare, in a confession to his friend Shaw:—

"My dear fellow,—I sit down to write you, to disburden a full heart, and cheer a heavy hour. It is spring time, and a universal languor has seized on me. Not long ago, I was an eagle. I had built my nest among the stars, and I soared in regions of unclouded ether. But I fell from heaven, and the spirit which once animated me has fled. I have lost every energy of soul, and the only relic of your friend is a sickly imagination, a fevered sensibility. I cannot study. I walk and muse till I can walk no longer. I sit down with Goldsmith or Rogers in my hand, and shed tears—at what? At fictitious misery; at tales of imaginary woe.

"My whole life has been a struggle with my feelings. Last winter I thought myself victorious. But earth-born Antæus has risen stronger than ever. I repeat it, my whole life has been a struggle with my feelings. Ask those with

whom I have lived, and they will tell you that I am a stoic. I almost thought so myself. But I only smothered a fire which will one day consume me. I sigh for tranquil happiness. I have long wished that my days might flow along like a gentle stream, which fertilizes its banks and reflects in its clear surface the face of heaven. But I can *only wish* it. I still continue sanguine, ardent, and inconstant. I can remember the days when I gloried in the moments of rapture, when I loved to shroud myself in the gloom of melancholy. You may remember them too. But I have grown wiser, as I have grown older. I now wish to do good in the world. 'I love a divine,' says the good Fénelon, 'who preaches to *save men's souls*, and not to *show himself*.' I perfectly agree with Fénelon; and to make such a divine as he loves, I must throw away those ridiculous ecstasies, and form myself to habits of piety and benevolence. One of the reasons why I dislike the rapture and depressions of spirit, which we used to encourage at college, is probably this—I find none to share them with me.

"The other day, I handed to a lady a sonnet of Southey's, which had wrung tears from me. 'It is pretty,' said she, with a smile. 'Pretty!' echoed I, as I looked at her; 'Pretty!' I went home. As I grew composed, I could not help reflecting that the lady who had made this answer was universally esteemed for her benevolence. I knew that she was goodness itself. But still she wanted feeling. 'And what is feeling?' said I to myself. I blushed when I thought more on the subject. I found that the mind was just as passive in that state which I called 'feeling' as when it received any impressions of sense. One consequence immediately struck me, that there was no *moral merit* in possessing feeling. Of course there can be no crime in wanting it. 'Well,' continued I, 'I have just been treating with contempt a woman of *active* benevolence, for not possessing what I must own it is no crime to want. Is this just?' I then went on to consider, whether there were not many persons who possessed this boasted feeling, but who were still deficient in *active* benevolence. A thousand instances occurred to me. I found myself among the number. 'It is true,' said I, 'that I sit in my study and shed tears over human misery. I weep over a novel. I weep over a tale of human woe. But do I ever relieve the distressed? Have I ever lightened the load of affliction?' My cheeks reddened at the question; a cloud of

error burst from my mind. I found that virtue did not consist in feeling, but in *acting from a sense of duty*."

Mr. Channing's poetic temperament was chiefly manifested, however, in the lofty hopes which it inspired for a state of ideal virtue in individuals and humanity, for "a more ample greatness and exact goodness, the world being inferior to the soul." In answer to one of his fervent outpourings upon these themes, his friend Walter writes to him:—"I have read your letter over and over again, and should not deserve to live, were I not delighted with the beautiful enthusiasm and benevolent wishes breathed in every word. They are monuments of your goodness and benevolence to me more valuable than those of brass and marble. But, my dear Channing, is not your theory incompatible with the experience of ages?" And in reply to yet another letter, his brother Francis says:—"You know nothing of yourself. You talk of your apathy and stoicism, when you are the baby of your emotions, and dandled by them without any chance of being weaned. What shall I expect? Nothing, certainly, but what is amiable and humane; but virtue in distraction may be as idle and useless, though soaring and sublime, as a lunatic." Friends on all sides, indeed, evidently thought him the prey of fevered imagination, and to one of their appeals to be more calm and prudent, he thus replies:—

"I will throw together a few observations on the subject, in as short a compass as possible, and without the least mixture of romance or enthusiasm. I do not mean to challenge you into the lists of argument. I do not fight for victory. I only wish to convince you that I am not so wild in my views, or so erroneous in my sentiments, as your letter represents me.

"You begin with observing, that 'the will of Heaven to man is declared in the situation in which he is placed, and in the circumstances of his life;' and you afterwards say, that 'every one is a Howard who like him applies his penny or his pound.' I cannot assent to this in its full extent. You evidently go upon the supposition, that the circumstances of our lives are decided by Heaven. I believe they are decided by ourselves. Man is the artificer of his own fortune. By exertion he can enlarge the sphere of his usefulness. By activity he can 'multiply himself.' It is mind which gives him an ascendant in society. It is mind which extends his power and ability; and it depends on himself to call forth

the energies of mind, to strengthen intellect, and form benevolence into a habit of the soul. The consequence which I deduce from these principles is this,—that Heaven has not, by placing me in particular circumstances, assigned me a determinate sphere of usefulness (which seems to be your opinion), but that it is in my power, and of course that it is my duty to widen the circle, and 'throw my beams' still farther 'into the night of adversity.' This, Francis, is the leading idea which runs through my letter, and will you call it extravagance?

"It is not enough that you do good in proportion to your power, when you have criminally neglected to enlarge this power. Will you call the idle man 'a Howard,' who indeed shares his loaf of bread with a brother beggar, but who, by industry, might have procured the means of making thousands happy? You understand me. I may have written a thousand extravagances to you which I have forgotten. But the great and striking principles which I advanced I have unfolded above, and they still appear to my sober reason as principles founded on immutable truth. You tell me I am only a candle. Perhaps I am less,—a farthing rushlight, a glowworm on a humble shrub. You say I am discontented at not being the sun. No such thing! Discontent is no trait in my character. Give me but the consciousness that I have done all I could and ought to do, and you pluck out every thorn from my bosom. I wish I could return your compliment, and say you were a candle. I wish I could point to a man of my acquaintance and say so. Philosophers tell us that a candle fills with light a sphere of four miles' diameter. Send me the dimensions of your sphere. Mine is fifteen feet by ten. Is it not shameful! Ambition has waved her flaming torch over nations, and set the world in a blaze. Avarice has penetrated earth itself, and with a steadier and more stinted light illumined the sunless mine. But show me humanity, with even one lonely candle in her hand, throwing a few beams into the night 'of adversity,' bringing to light the hidden treasures of neglected intellect, &c. &c. I dare go no farther, lest you should begin to compliment me about enthusiasm."

The form which his ardent philanthropy assumed was the one which must always cheer the truly noble and heroic, and which then presented itself in such glowing hues to many minds in France, Germany, and England,—the vision of a

perfect society. "Socrates and Plato," writes his brother, "were schoolmasters; Pythagoras went farther, and formed a society of virtuous disciples,—a society wonderful, because unparalleled. It was, however, confined to but a part of Italy. My brother advances with noble ardour to a vaster enterprise. The world is to be his Academy, and all mankind his pupils. To make all men happy, by making all virtuous, is his glorious project. I adore it, thou moral Archimedes! but where wilt thou stand to move the mental world? Whither has enthusiasm hurried you?" &c. So, also, his friend Walter writes:—"Will you make yourself miserable, because you cannot reach the rainbow from the hill? In heaven, Channing, you will find the scope you seek for progression in virtue; but here the mind partakes of the clay which incloses it," &c.

His views may be best learned from the following letter:—

"I have of late, my friend, launched boldly into speculations on the possible condition of mankind in the progress of their improvement. I find *avarice* the great bar to all my schemes, and I do not hesitate to assert that the human race will never be happier than at present till the establishment of a community of property.

"I derive my sentiments from the *nature of man.* What is man? for what was he born? To vegetate, to draw nutrition from the earth, and then wither away forgotten and unknown? Oh, no! he bears a spark of divinity in his bosom, and it is Promethean fire which animates his clay. Look at the human mind. See it bursting forth, spreading itself through infinite space, by its power of receiving ideas from external objects concentrating immensity in a point, and by its powers of retrospect and anticipation concentrating eternity in a moment. Need I mention his faculty of moral discernment, or his creative imagination? Now, Shaw, I would ask you, in what does the perfection of man consist; which part of his nature requires most care; from what source is his most rational and permanent happiness derived? The answer you *must* make is, 'The *mind.*' In proportion as his mind is improved in science and virtue, in that degree is he happy.

"Now, my friend, let me ask you to look on the world and to show me the man who is engaged in this improvement. All is hurry, all is business. But why this tumult? To pamper the senses and load the body with idle trappings.

Show me the man who ever toiled for wealth to relieve misery, and unrivet the chains of oppression. Show me the man who ever imported virtue from the Indies, or became a better Christian by increasing his hoard. Are not the mines of science forsaken for those of Potosí? Does not the pursuit of wealth damp our feelings, freeze up the tears of benevolence, check the flight of genius, and excite in our bosom distrust and suspicion towards our *brethren of the human race?* Does it not render mankind venal and mercenary? Yes; give me gold enough and I will buy up the souls of our whole species. I do not except myself. I love money. I have my price. And what is gold? Perishing earth and dust. What does it procure? Meat, drink, and clothing. Now, Shaw, since the body is so inferior to the mind, do you think that more attention should be paid to feeding and clothing it than is absolutely necessary? No. Is not this speculative opinion supported by fact? Do not nature and experience declare to us, that the more temperate we are, the healthier and happier we are? *The wants of the body, then, are few; and the labour of mankind is misapplied.* This conclusion is fairly drawn from the premises.

"But here you will cry out, 'All this is theoretic nonsense. Man is selfish. He will always strive to gratify his senses; and if gold will procure these gratifications, he will always pursue it.' Stop, my friend; I grant that man *is* selfish. But *ought* he to be so? Was man framed for himself, or for his fellow-men? On this point of morality I know we shall agree; and you will think as I do, that if we *can* substitute benevolence for selfishness, we shall add to the sum of human virtue and happiness. Again, ought man to provide most for his body or his mind? Here, too, we shall agree;—and no doubt you wish to see a love of science take the place of a love of money in the human breast. Now I think that these changes can be effected in the sentiments and feelings of mankind. How? By *education.* Do you wonder, Shaw, that you see so many selfish and avaricious wretches on earth, when you behold every mother, as she holds her child on her knee, instilling the maxims of worldly prudence into his tender bosom? How is it that you and I, in the midst of this infection, still glow with benevolence to mankind, and derive such high joys from the cultivation of our minds? Is not this an earnest of what would happen universally, were the world to unite in instilling these noble

principles into the rising generation? Judge from your own feelings, whether the principle of benevolence, sympathy, or humanity is not *so strongly impressed on the heart by God himself*, that, with proper care, it might become the principle of action. Judge from your own feelings, whether the love of science is not founded upon so natural a sentiment,—I mean curiosity,—that, with the same care, it would pervade every bosom. I declare to you that I believe these ideas to be incontrovertible. Do you not glow at the prospect? Behold the rising virtues attended by truth and wisdom,—peace with her olive-branch, compassion with her balm——. O my friend! I can go no farther. I feel a noble enthusiasm spreading through my frame; every nerve is strung, every muscle is labouring; my bosom pants with a great, half-conceived, and indescribable sentiment; I seem inspired with a surrounding deity.

"'But stop,' I hear you say, 'you are too impetuous. How will you lead mankind to educate their children in this way?' Ay, there is the rub; there lies the difficulty. It is only by implanting benevolence and love of science in the mind of the parent, and rooting out *his* avarice and selfishness, that we can hope to see the child educated as we wish. 'But how can this be effected? Do you mean to war with nature?' No; I am convinced that virtue and benevolence are *natural* to man. I believe that selfishness and avarice have arisen from two ideas universally inculcated on the young and practised upon the old,—(1.) *that every individual has a distinct interest to pursue from the interest of the community;* and (2.) that *the body requires more care than the mind.*

"I believe these ideas to be false; and I believe that you can never banish them, till you persuade mankind to cease to act upon them; that is, till you can persuade them (1.) to destroy all distinctions of property (which you are sensible must perpetuate this supposed distinction of interest), and to throw the produce of their labour into one common stock, instead of hoarding it up in their own garners; and (2.) to become really conscious of the powers and the dignity of their mind. You must convince mankind that they themselves, and all which they possess, are but *parts of a great whole;* that they are bound by God, their common Father, to *labour* for the good of this great whole; that their wants are but few, and can easily be supplied; that *mind, mind* re-

quires all their care; and that the dignity of their nature and the happiness of others require them to improve this mind in science and virtue. Believe me, my friend, you can never root out selfishness and avarice, till you destroy the idea that private interest is distinct from the public. You must lead every man to propose to himself, in all his actions, the good of the whole for his object. He must plough and till the earth, that all may eat of the produce of his labour. *Mine* and *thine* must be discarded from his vocabulary. He should call everything *ours*. Here would be no robbery, for a man could steal nothing but his own. No man would be idle where such sentiments and such examples prevailed; and where there was no luxury to enervate him, every man would have leisure to cultivate the mind. We should sleep securely; we should live long and happily; and, perhaps, like old Enoch, when the time came, be translated to heaven.

"You will tell me that this is all chimera, that if we could indeed convert one generation, it would be very easy to perpetuate this order of things by education, through those that followed; but how shall we convert this generation. Shaw! do you sit still and ask this question? Rise, rise! It is the voice of benevolence. Do you not feel new energies at the sound? Why despair of success? Are not you yourself ready to devote every moment of existence and every drop of your blood to the service of mankind? And are you and I the *only* virtuous ones upon earth? No! Thousands are ready to join hands with us. Truth is omnipotent. She must prevail. Are not benevolence and thirst for knowledge so natural to our race, that, by cherishing them in youth, when the mind is unwarped, we can form them into *principles of action?* Is there a man so hard of heart, that you cannot find in him some string to vibrate to the touch of humanity? Why despair, then? You profess to believe in the Christian religion. Does not Christianity favour such a scheme? I believe it will be hard to reconcile Christian humility, charity, and contempt of riches, with the present establishment of human affairs. Read Soame Jenyns. His arguments cannot be disproved.

"Rouse, then! Consider how you may best serve mankind. Lend this letter to Walter. 'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers,' will unite our exertions in the cause of virtue and science. We will beat down with the irresistible engines of truth those strong ramparts consoli-

dated by time, within which avarice, ignorance, and selfishness have intrenched themselves. We will plant the standards of virtue and science on the ruins, and lay the foundation of a fair fabric of human happiness to endure as long as time, and to acquire new grace and lustre with the lapse of ages.

"My dear Shaw, I fear you will say I am crazy. No, no—

> "'My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
> And makes as healthful music.'

Then you will tell me I am one of the Illuminati. Upon my honour, I never did receive any letter or letters from Weishaupt* in my life. These sentiments have arisen altogether from my detestation of avarice and selfishness.

"You will see, through the whole of this letter, an ardent desire to serve mankind. This is the reigning wish of my heart. Do try to think of some means in which we can unite our efforts for so desirable an end."

What particular plan had taken shape in his mind does not appear distinctly, though, from his papers, it is probable that he thought of joining himself, as minister, to a settlement of Scotch emigrants, whose fundamental principle was common property. Friends speak laughingly of his "great scheme;" and Walter proposes, in a vein of mock earnestness, to carry out the "imaginary republic of Coleridge and Southey, and a community of goods, in the backwoods, or, better far, in some South Sea island." He then goes on to expose what appear to him the peculiar dangers and temptations of "community," and ends thus:—

"Indeed, Channing, your sentiments are too extravagant. No doubt man would be happier, if he were better. But the difficulty is to make him better. I do not know that this *can* be done. You say it is possible; but I can hardly believe. I fear that the German Weishaupt has been tampering with you. However, he never attacked your reason and judgment, but only warmed your imagination, by showing you, in distant perspective, beautiful scenes of men, and women, and children, sitting under oak-trees, eating acorns and drinking water. I suppose, in conformity with his wishes, you are studying German in order to be able to comprehend the mysteries of the institution, which are so sublime that

* Professor at the Bavarian Institute of Ingoldstadt, and founder of the Order of the Illuminati, 1776.

the English language sinks under their weight. Jacobinism is closely connected with their system, is it not? and this is the reason why you tell me high things of the Democratic Virginians?"

His grandfather Ellery, too, in his plain, straight-forward fashion, opens his mind to his young relative thus:—

"Godwin's 'Political Justice' is after the manner of the French philosophers. I am not acquainted with his moral character; but I despise French philosophists. Their system goes to the destruction of all government and all morality. I wish the poorer sort of the Godwinites and Jacobinites would push home upon their rich leaders in the doctrines of perfectibility and equalization, the necessity of a community of goods, in order to a consistency of conduct with principle. This would make a division among them; for I believe I may confidently say, that there is not a rich man of those principles, who would share his property with the poor of the pretended fraternity. He might perhaps say, 'Be ye warmed, be ye clothed;' but he would not give a cent, unless for the purpose of elections, or to carry some other favourite point. The principles referred to are deistical; and while men are absorbed in luxury, and entertain such high notions of human nature in general, and of themselves in particular, they will not listen with attention to the self-denying doctrines of the Gospel, nor submit to that subordination which is essential to order and happiness, but will oppose themselves even to the government of Jehovah. To stand firm in the midst of such characters, requires a great degree of religious fortitude; but I trust persecution is not necessary to preserve your integrity, or enkindle your zeal. The rock on which the true church of Christ is built, is not to be overturned by violence or by undermining."

These most kindly meaning, but over-cautious, friends little knew the depth of that living well of humanity, which, first opening in young Channing's mind while reading Hutcheson in college, was thenceforth to pour abroad an exhaustless river. The current might be diverted, but nothing could seal the fountain. Their advice influenced his judgment, but it did not make him for an instant untrue to the law of his own character. The project present to his mind, whatever it may have been, was laid aside; but the large philanthropy which prompted it was only purified by the

sacrifice. No fears suggested by other minds daunted his own indomitable trust. Then, and for ever,

> "white handed Hope,
> The hovering angel girt with golden wings,"

cheered him and led him on.

It would be interesting, however, to know how far this experience, that enthusiasm impelled him to plans which those whom he reverenced and loved thought extravagant, was instrumental in developing the deliberateness which was so conspicuous a trait in maturer life. And some may question, whether he and the world gained more or lost by the vigilant purpose, then probably awakened, to avoid the least mistake. Were there not latent energies in him which never germinated, rich impulses which never bloomed and bore seeds for chance winds to scatter? Does not the Infinite Disposer balance the deficiencies of one class of characters by the excesses of another, and thus produce harmony by the counterpoise of contrasted energies? Can any created being approximate nearer to the right than by never compromising and never postponing, but always obeying, the highest impulse? On the other hand, most of those who knew Dr. Channing well would probably say that his crowning grace was the calm patience with which he refrained from acting, until he was free to do so without a discord in any tone of feeling. He often declared, that, if there was anything of worth in his life and influence, he owed it to the fidelity with which he had listened to every objection that was presented by the suggestion of his own or other minds to what he *wished* to believe or to do. He thought, too, that in younger days his impetuous nature had led him into error; and though he found it a hard trial to resist the fervency of his temperament, he was yet firmly resolved never "to be possessed," but, under all events, to "possess his soul in peace."

But while Mr. Channing's interests were thus broad, his feelings were constantly concentrating more and more upon religion, and a preparation for the ministry. And to his friend Shaw he thus writes:—

"I am studying divinity harder than ever. Thanks to God who made me, I have chosen the only profession which could make me happy. By studying the Scriptures themselves, I am trying to discover the will of God, and the uncorrupted doctrines which our Saviour taught. I am certain

that I am impartial; and the honest mind is in little danger of going wrong.

"I once called myself a Christian. But till lately I knew not the meaning of the word. I entreat you, Shaw, not to absorb yourself so much in political pursuits, as to lose sight of the most important of all your concerns. The distinguishing duties of our holy religion are humility, purity of heart, forgiveness of our worst enemies, forbearance under the heaviest injuries, detachment from the pleasures and pursuits of this world, and supreme affection to Deity. As charity is among the first of Christian virtues, Christianity necessarily requires of us an active life. It requires us to mingle with our fellow-men, and exert ourselves in promoting human happiness. By 'detachment from the world,' then, I do not mean monastic retirement. You cannot do too much good in the world.

. . . . . .

"It is impossible for any one to be a Christian, unless he believes that the end of this life is to prepare for heaven, and bends his affections, his hopes, and his thoughts to this all-important end. Is your heart pure? "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Are you humble? By which I mean, have you such a sense of your unworthiness in the sight of God, that you are willing to receive with an honest heart the truths which his Son taught, to give yourself up like a little child to be formed and guided by him, and to receive salvation, not as due to your own merits, but as a free and undeserved gift of God through Jesus Christ? 'Whosoever shall not humble himself as this little child, shall not enter the kingdom of God.' 'Resist not evil.' Here is a duty too sublime almost for our performance. We can hardly reach to so divine a height, as to imitate our Maker in doing good to the unjust, as well as just. Many Christians try to explain away this duty, and infidels laugh at it. But still it is in the Bible, and it ought strictly to be adhered to. What is the end of human existence? To prepare for heaven. How can we obtain heaven? By cultivating *love to God* and *love to man*. These are the great roots from which grow all the duties I have recommended. Now charity must govern us in all our conduct with mankind. Christ has expressly declared that this is a necessary qualification for one of his followers. Let us suppose, then, that we are injured. Suppose that, like our Master, we are

spit upon. What does charity command us to do? Does she say to us, 'Retaliate,' or 'Forgive?' Is it not plainer than sunshine! But Christianity goes farther. She tells us that we cannot meet with an injury worth the name. If one could rob us of heaven, he would indeed injure us. In no other part is a Christian vulnerable. Farewell. In haste, from a full heart.

"P.S.—My intention was to have given you a delineation of the peculiar *doctrines* of our religion. But I had not room, and began with too little method. Should you desire it, I will hereafter give you my ideas in order on this subject. I assure you, I was struck with the sublime *precepts* of Christianity, when I began the study of the Bible. I was struck, too, with observing how far I had deviated from them. I found that I had not a pure, an humble, a pious, or a charitable heart. I saw how Christian charity differed from what I used to call benevolence. Everything was new to me."

. . . . . .

"You may see from my letters the warmth with which I have embraced the Christian cause. Would to God that I could resign every worldly prospect, and bend my whole soul to improvement in religion and the diffusion of the truths of the Gospel. O Shaw! it cuts me to the heart to see the contempt and irreverence with which the name and the worship of the 'Majesty of Heaven' are treated by the generality of mankind. Do we not offer a new cup of gall to our crucified Saviour? Are we not as inhuman as the Jews? Do we not plait, like them, a crown of thorns for the head of our Redeemer? They despised him, and we are ashamed to acknowledge him."

From his own accounts, he was at this period much engaged in a patient and, according to his means, a thorough review of the evidences of Christianity, being stimulated no doubt by the open avowals of infidelity among the intelligent men of Virginia. This examination led him, after long struggles and painful perplexities, to an unfaltering faith in the providential mission and miraculous character of Jesus Christ. It was under the impulse of this deepened reverence for revelation, that he began the serious study of the Scriptures, even writing out for himself quite a voluminous commentary upon the New Testament, which he afterward destroyed. He sought, too, the advice of religious friends;

and we find him thus describing his pursuits and spiritual condition, in a letter to the Rev. Joseph McKean, then lately settled at Milton, Massachusetts.

"Dear Sir,—I applied to our common friend and brother, Francis, a few weeks ago, to desire him to procure for me a religious correspondent. I told him that I could not find in Virginia one young man to whom I could express my sentiments on religious subjects, or to whose bosom I could confide those feelings which the study of the Scriptures inspired in my own. I told him that I wanted a friend to whom I could propose the difficulties which I found in the Bible,—a friend who had devoted his life to the service of his God, to whom I could open my whole heart, and talk with the familiarity of a brother. In a late letter, he tells me that you were pleased with the idea of such a correspondence.

"I began the study of divinity with attending to the evidences of Christianity. I examined them with caution, and I think without prejudice; and I am convinced that this religion is truly divine. I have now undertaken to acquaint myself with the doctrines of this religion; and to do this I have not applied to any commentators, or to any authors except the apostles themselves. My object is to discover the truth. I wish to know what Christ taught, not what men have made him teach. I well knew, that if I began with reading polemical divinity, there were ten chances to one that I should embrace the system of the first author which I studied, whether right or wrong. I was certain that, as Christ came to save the world, every truth essential to salvation must be plainly unfolded in the Scriptures. I had also observed that many ministers, instead of guiding their flocks to the gates of heaven, had become so entangled in controversy as to neglect their most solemn charge, the saving of men's souls. These are the reasons which have induced me to apply to the Bible,—that only source of divine knowledge, and to the Bible alone. The advantages I have derived from such a course seem to prove the propriety of it. I might have found the same truths in other authors, but they could never have made so forcible an impression on my mind. I have been active in acquiring, not passive in receiving, the great precepts and doctrines of Christianity, and the strength of my conviction is proportioned to the labour I have bestowed. My heart, too, has been affected, as well as my mind enlightened. I have learned to view everything, as it

were, through the medium of Scripture, to judge of actions by the standard of Scripture morality, and to estimate the importance of present wants by their influence on the happiness of another state. Such is the plan which I follow, and such are the effects which I ascribe to it. I would thank you for your opinion on the propriety of it."

He then goes on to state some critical difficulties which he says have struck him, and closes as follows:—

"They do not affect any of the great doctrines of Christianity. But, as they are parts of the Bible, I wish to understand them, and as they are apparent contradictions, they affect the credibility of the history."

Mr. Channing was at this time examining also the speculative doctrines of the various sects; and he apparently pursued this work with something of the blended freedom and caution of his later years, for we find that he was charged by correspondents both with over-orthodoxy and heresy. One friend writes to him:—"For my part, I must dispense with your sermon, as our *tenets*, I conjecture, do not coincide. You will look quite sober when I tell you that I am a 'Price-ite,' and believe, with him, an honest mind to be the one thing needful. I am quite a heretic, I know, on your system, but hope it is not criminal, as I am Christian enough to hold fast to every principle necessary to piety and to virtue." But from the opposite side, a correspondent appeals to him thus:—"From an observation in one of your late letters, expressive of a doubt of the vicarious character of Christ, I am induced to think that you have not read Butler with that attention he deserves. I think he has proved, that if we are convinced by historical evidence of the truth of revelation, we are not to doubt of its *doctrines* because wonderful or mysterious. The arguments on the proposition are worthy, perhaps, of another attentive perusal. I am not singular in allowing them to be irrefragable. As a friend to truth, I shall with pleasure peruse your reply, and as candidly give to every objection its due weight. I must, however, request you not to unfold them in your letters, which are generally shown to ——, as they may give unreasonable and painful alarms. You know the prejudices of education, and that to the last generation, one step from orthodoxy is a deviation into heresy." His liberality was probably quickened by the variety of opinions which he found prevailing round him,

and by the catholic spirit that pervaded Richmond. But although he found advantage in thus looking upon all sides of dogmatic questions, yet his inward struggles were greatly multiplied, and his mental loneliness became almost intolerable, as appears from the following extracts from letters.

"Would, Shaw, that you were here. I want a friend; but I can nowhere find one. My social feelings are as strong as ever. But I cannot often gratify them. I am sick of the unmeaning conversation of fashionable circles. By *society*, I mean the communion of souls. But where is this to be found? How I long to lean upon your arm, as I walk through the woods! But away with gloom. . . . . I cannot but thank you for your kind attentions, which from any one else would be burdensome to me. But knowing the goodness of your heart, and that you receive more happiness in conferring than I can in receiving your favours, I banish the painful idea from my mind that I am troublesome to you, and enjoy without alloy all the pleasures which your friendship provides for me.

. . . . . .

"If you can indeed find leisure, write, I beg of you. I would empty my light purse (for light it is) every day of the week, if money could purchase such letters as I have to-night received. Do not construe anything I have said into an indifference about hearing from you. I wish you could see the rapture beam in my dull eyes as I open your packages; you would want no other proof of my eagerness to correspond with you."

There was at that time but one church in Richmond, though services were held also in the Hall of Burgesses, where an Episcopalian and Presbyterian alternately officiated; and interest in religion generally was slight. Mr. Channing was driven to rely, therefore, very much upon himself in determining his views, and finding nutriment for devoutness and love. His trials and struggles he thus makes known to his uncle:—

"Would to God that I could return a favourable answer to your question respecting religion! Christianity is here breathing its last. I cannot find a friend with whom I can even converse on religious subjects. I am obliged to confine my feelings to my own bosom. How often, when I have walked out into the country, have I looked for a companion to whom I could address the language of praise and adoration

which was trembling on my lips, and which the surrounding scenes of nature had excited! But in vain. I fear that they read the volume of nature without once thinking of its Author. The Bible is wholly neglected. That treasure of wisdom and comfort is trodden under foot. The wonders of redeeming love excite no sentiments of gratitude. The glad tidings of a Saviour are heard without joy. Infidelity is very general among the higher classes; and they who do not reject Christianity can hardly be said to believe, as they never examine the foundations on which it rests. In fine, religion is in a deplorable state. Many of the people have wondered how I could embrace such an *unprofitable* profession as the ministry. Alas! they know not the riches which God has promised to those who serve him. You may fear, my uncle, lest I have fallen a prey to the contagion of example. Thanks to God! I have maintained my ground. The streams of dissipation have flowed by me, and I have not felt a wish to taste them.

"I will go farther, Sir, I believe that I never experienced that *change of heart* which is necessary to constitute a Christian, till within a few months past. The worldling would laugh at me; he would call conversion a farce. But the man who has felt the influences of the Holy Spirit can oppose fact and experience to empty declaration and contemptuous sneers. You remember the language of the blind man whom Jesus healed,—"This I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Such is the language which the real Christian may truly utter. Once, and not long ago, I was blind, blind to my own condition, blind to the goodness of God, and blind to the love of my Redeemer. Now I behold with shame and confusion the depravity and rottenness of my heart. Now I behold with love and admiration the long-suffering and infinite benevolence of Deity.

"All my sentiments and affections have lately changed. I once considered mere moral attainments as the only object I had to pursue. I have now solemnly given myself up to God. I consider supreme love to him as the first of all duties, and morality seems but a branch from the vigorous root of religion. I love mankind because they are the children of God. I practise temperance, and strive for purity of heart, that I may become a temple for his Holy Spirit to dwell in. I long, most earnestly long, to be such a minister as Fénelon describes. Religion is the only treasure

worth pursuing. I consider the man who recommends it to society as more useful than the greatest statesman and patriot who adorns the page of history. What liberty so valuable as liberty of heart,—freedom from sin?"

In this letter, it will be observed, Mr. Channing says, "I have now solemnly given myself up to God;" and among his papers is found his act of self-consecration. One reads the time-stained writing with reverent tenderness, as he would take from a crypt a sacred relic; but it is of too personal a character to publish. It is chiefly remarkable for the sincerity with which its writer lays bare the morbid action of his soul, and for the care with which he seeks to guard against renewed failure in every possible emergency, and to map out clearly the path of duty in all relations. This paper marks the transition-point in the development of his character. The day-dreams of boyhood, the hopes of youth, the longings and aspirations of eighteen years, like morning clouds, condense and fall in a refreshing rain of penitence. He has recognized in himself the want of unity, moral confusion and discordant tendencies, liability to sin and actual sinfulness, self-love, bondage to sense, to personal habits, to social customs; he has felt to the quick the need of a harmonizing principle of order, of serenity, fulness, freedom, force; he has become conscious of the sublime power of conforming action, thought, and temper to the inward oracle of right; above all, he has learned the mysterious law of spiritual life, that pure impulses must be renewed by trustful, humble, earnest seeking and waiting for the influence of the Divine spirit, and has experienced the awful fact, that

> "From God is all that soothes the life of man,
> His high endeavour, and his glad success,
> His strength to suffer, and his will to serve."

Henceforth there will be less impetuosity, more steadfastness, less bold enthusiasm, more forethought, vigilance, and patient hope. An on-looker may be inclined to mourn that conscientiousness so strictly rules an originally buoyant genius; but he will see, too, with what beautiful radiance, love, constantly brightening like a central sun, throws peace and joy upon balanced powers, moving in even orbits. The thought, also, will present itself, had this noble heart but reached maturity in an age when a faith serene as that of his later life was filling society around him like a genial atmosphere,

then how would such an era of earnest piety have expanded every faculty, as the sunbeams open flowers! But these confessions, shadowed as they are by the gloomy theology which at that period overspread all minds, still prove how sovereign was rectitude in this man's moral nature, and how comprehensive and minute was its sway. There was no trait, through the whole of after life, so characteristic as the unsleeping oversight of his conscience.

Particular phrases, and indeed the whole tone of the papers which thus open to us the secret chambers of the writer's spirit, show that the views which he then held of his own inward condition, and of his need of a renewed life, were such as are commonly called "serious." It will be seen that he even uses the almost technical expressions, "change of heart," and "conversion." In regard to these expressions, however, and others also in the preceding letter, it is but right to add, that he frequently asserted, without reservation, that he was *never* either a Trinitarian or a Calvinist; and once, at a later period of life, when asked by a most estimable orthodox acquaintance, "whether he had not at some time experienced conversion," he answered,—"I should say not, unless the whole of my life may be called, as it truly has been, a *process* of conversion;" to which this quaint rejoinder was made,—"Then, friend Channing, you were born regenerate, for you certainly are now a child of God."

Of this important era in his life, Dr. Channing, as late as 1842, thus wrote to a friend:*—

"Your account of Richmond was very interesting. You little suspected how many remembrances your letter was to awaken in me. I spent a year and a half there, and perhaps the most eventful of my life. I lived alone, too poor to buy books, spending my days and nights in an outbuilding, with no one beneath my roof except during the hours of school-keeping. There I toiled as I have never done since, for gradually my constitution sank under the unremitting exertion. With not a human being to whom I could communicate my deepest thoughts and feelings, and shrinking from common society, I passed through intellectual and moral conflicts, through excitements of heart and mind, so absorbing as often to banish sleep, and to destroy almost wholly the power of digestion. I was worn well-nigh to a

* Huguenots in America. By Mrs. George Lee. Appendix, p. 282.

skeleton. Yet I look back on those days and nights of loneliness and frequent gloom with thankfulness. If I ever struggled with my whole soul for purity, truth, and goodness, it was there. There, amidst sore trials, the great question, I trust, was settled within me, whether I would obey the higher or lower principles of my nature,—whether I would be the victim of passion, the world, or the free child and servant of God. It is an interesting recollection, that this great conflict was going on within me, and that my mind was then receiving its impulse towards the perfect, without a thought or suspicion of one person around me as to what I was experiencing. And is not this the case continually? The greatest work on earth is going on near us, perhaps under our roof, and we know it not. In a licentious, intemperate city, one spirit, at least, was preparing, in silence and loneliness, to toil, not wholly in vain, for truth and holiness."

He returned to Newport in July of the year 1800. The vessel in which he sailed was a sloop engaged in transporting coal. It was in a most wretched condition, being leaky and damp, and worse manned, for the captain and crew were drunken. They ran upon a shoal, and lay there till fortunately lifted off by the next tide. He was very sick and much exposed. And his friends were shocked, on his arrival, to find the vigorous, healthy young man, who had left them eighteen months before, changed to a thin and pallid invalid. His days of health were gone, and henceforth he was to experience in the constantly depressed tone of a most delicate organization the severest trial of his life.

Chap. V. — STUDIES AND SETTLEMENT.

Æt. 20–23. 1800–1803.

At Newport, in the bosom of his family, Mr. Channing now remained for a year and a half, devoted to the pursuit of his theological studies, and having under his charge the son of his Virginia friend, Mr. Randolph, and his own youngest brother, whom he was preparing for college. It was as deep delight to him to be at home, as it was to his mother, sisters, and brothers to have him with them. Francis had been compelled to return to Cambridge, where he was established as a lawyer. William thus became the head of the household;

and it was in this situation that his lovely domestic character began fully to display itself. The mantle of his father's sweetness fell upon him. When troubles and anxieties grew too strong for his mother to bear with equanimity, he would pass his arm around her, saying, "It will all be well—it will all be well." He began, too, family devotions, and produced an impression of holiness and gentle dignity upon the minds of the younger members of the home circle, which can never be effaced. It is said that he was conscious, however, of an inherited tendency to irritability and sternness, which sometimes displayed itself in words or deeds; and that, sorrowing over such frailty, and feeling its unworthiness, he resolved that he would never become a minister till he had gained a control over all angry dispositions. The struggle led to a beautiful triumph; and no one, who saw the unbroken serenity of his mature manhood, could easily conceive that there had ever been an original excitability to overcome. His disinterestedness and anxious care for each and every one around him were unvarying. He undertook the superintendence of his three sisters' education, and induced one of them to give herself up very much to his guidance. "This year," writes this sister, "is impressed on my mind by his kind interest in me. He used to take me on his lap, and hold long conversations, which I sometimes thought too serious, though he would also play draughts with me for my amusement. He led me to walk with him, also, on the beach, when he would attract my attention to the glories of nature, and of its Author." He was at this time, though not unsocial, yet disinclined to large companies, and fond of retirement. Such a course, he used to say, "made less work for repentance." His whole mode of life was extremely simple and abstemious, partly with the view of restoring his enfeebled health, but still more because he felt such habits to be favourable to the calmness and clearness of mind, and the pure spirituality which he aspired to reach.

The following extracts from his early papers will best show the manner in which, at this period, he was endeavouring to discipline his spirit.

"I must not consider doing good as an accidental pleasure, but make it the business of life. Let me seek, not wait, for opportunities. Let the active spirit of Christian charity be ever watchful in discovering objects, and persevering in devising means of usefulness. Love is happiness; he who grows

in love grows in happiness. God is Love; and his image in us is love. If I would resemble him, let me strengthen love. I feel now that a degrading selfishness reigns in my heart."

"In doing good, let me aim at simplicity of means. There is no need of expressing my intention, of asking an idle question, of appearing to labour. Let a silent, persevering course of action, lead me to my end."

"Poverty and sickness have the first claims for relief. Let me, in my solitary walks by night, search for wretchedness, and for my Lord's sake communicate the last of my store. Let me remember with Titus, that I have lost that day in which I have done no good to a fellow-man."

"But there are higher ways of doing good. I should show the influence of religion in my life and conversation. Religion is amiable, gentle, cheerful, serene; a friend to the social affections, the source of disinterestedness. Let me not represent it, then, as gloomy or hopeless. Levity, unmeaning gaiety, however, throws the mind off its guard, and opens the door to every temptation. Strict self-command is absolutely necessary. The Christian, though cheerful, is vigilant."

"Let charity embrace in her broad arms all sects. Why should I brand any who differ from me with opprobrious epithets? Let me unite with all who love Jesus Christ in sincerity in propagating his religion."

"It will sometimes be necessary to change the tone of approbation and pity to that of denial. But let me act on such occasions deliberately, not from whim or dislike; and having formed my resolution, let me adhere to it with firmness. Let me offer my reasons in a short, perspicuous manner, or, if I wish to conceal them, give one positive answer, and leave the subject, undisturbed by remonstrance, ridicule, or reproach. Mildness is not inconsistent with manly firmness. Benevolence will lose all its beauty, and much of its influence, if allowed to degenerate into indiscriminate, weak indulgence. A world would be too small a recompense for one sacrifice of principle."

"When I feel irritable, let me be silent, let me quit society. I wish to be cool and collected amidst insult and provocation. I would avoid the diffuseness which characterizes anger, and vindicate my character, conduct, or opinions, in as few and temperate words as consists with the regard I owe to truth.

All impatience to stop the person who speaks to me will serve but to irritate. Let me be calm, not using self-command as a means of triumph, but of mutual happiness."

The whole energy of his nature, indeed, was then devoted to a preparation for the responsible profession that he had chosen. His days were passed at the Redwood Library, where was freely accessible to his use a collection of books, extremely rare and valuable for the times; and at night the light in the little office near the house, which he used for a study, was seen burning long after darkness had settled over his neighbours' homes. But this period of his life has been most happily illustrated by himself.

"I must bless God for the place of my nativity; for as my mind unfolded, I became more and more alive to the beautiful scenery which now attracts strangers to our island. My first liberty was used in roaming over the neighbouring fields and shores; and amid this glorious nature that love of liberty sprang up, which has gained strength within me to this hour. I early received impressions of the great and the beautiful, which I believe have had no small influence in determining my modes of thought and habits of life. In this town I pursued for a time my studies of theology. I had no professor or teacher to guide me; but I had two noble places of study. One was yonder beautiful edifice, now so frequented and so useful as a public library, then so deserted, that I spent day after day, and sometimes week after week, amidst its dusty volumes, without interruption from a single visitor. The other place was yonder beach, the roar of which has so often mingled with the worship of this place, my daily resort, dear to me in the sunshine, still more attractive in the storm. Seldom do I visit it now without thinking of the work which there, in the sight of that beauty, in the sound of those waves, was carried on in my soul. No spot on earth has helped to form me so much as that beach. There I lifted up my voice in praise amidst the tempest. There, softened by beauty, I poured out my thanksgiving and contrite confessions. There, in reverential sympathy with the mighty power around me, I became conscious of power within. There struggling thoughts and emotions broke forth, as if moved to utterance by nature's eloquence of the winds and waves. There began a happiness surpassing all worldly pleasures, all gifts of fortune—the happiness of communing with the works of God. I believe that the

worship, of which I have this day spoken, was aided in my own soul by the scenes in which my early life was passed."*

It was at this time, also, that he saw much of the Rev. Dr. Hopkins, and received deep impressions from the influence of his character and doctrines. The following spirited reminiscences, communicated in a letter to Professor Park, of Andover, present a very pleasing sketch of that consistent seeker after truth and holiness, who, whatever his speculative errors, was at least thoroughly in earnest.

"It was not until I had left college that I became acquainted with him, and a short intercourse dispelled all the fear and reserve which my early impressions had left in my mind. His conversation was free, rather abrupt, blunt, and often facetious. We saw at once that he had lived in his study, and borrowed very little from the manners of the fashionable world. He took pleasure in talking with me of his past life, his controversies, &c., and I regret that I took no notes, and did not, by questions, acquaint myself with the progress of his mind. He told me, I think more than once, of his first intercourse with ——, who had received Calvinism in its old forms. —— resisted his doctrines relating to the disinterested character of faith and religion in general. At length his objections were overcome, and one day, bursting into tears, he told Dr. Hopkins that he was conscious that he had never experienced true religion. Dr. Hopkins also gave me some particulars of his controversy with Dr. ——, in which it was plain that he considered himself as the undoubted conqueror. I exceedingly regret that I did not learn more from him of President Edwards. My impression is, that President Edwards was a good deal indebted to Dr. Hopkins for his later views of religion, especially for those which we find in his essays on 'Virtue,' and on 'God's End in Creation.' I hope you will point out clearly the relation between these eminent men. Dr. Hopkins had not the profound genius of Edwards, but was he not a man of a freer and bolder mind?

"I was attached to Dr. Hopkins chiefly by his theory of disinterestedness. I had studied with great delight during my college life the philosophy of Hutcheson, and the stoical morality, and these had prepared me for the noble, self-sacrificing doctrines of Dr. Hopkins. I have forgotten most of

* Works, Vol. IV., p. 336.

our conversations on this subject. I remember his once telling me that he did not consider the last part of 1 Cor. xiii. as referring to a future life; and I think that by the 'perfect' which was to 'come,' he understood the revelation of disinterested love under the gospel. One day, a relative of mine, talking with him about the text Rom. ix. 3 ('I could wish myself accursed') observed that the passage should be rendered, 'I *did* wish.' Dr. Hopkins replied, that if Paul did not say what our version ascribes to him, he *ought* to have said it. The idea of entire self-surrender to the general good was the strongest in his mind. How far he founded his moral system on the 'general good,' may be learned best from a tract he left on the subject, which Mrs. Hopkins put into my hands after his death.

"He was very true to his doctrine of disinterestedness, as far as money was concerned. His liberality abounded in his deep poverty. One day my elder brother visited him to take leave of him, on going to establish himself in another town. Dr. Hopkins said to him—'I suppose you hope to get money. Very well. Get it justly, and spend it generously, and I don't care how much you get.' Dr. Patten told me, that once at a meeting of ministers, the case of a poor widow was laid before them, on which occasion Dr. Hopkins gave all he had, a quarter of a dollar. He was accustomed to say, that after that time he never knew want, and was able to commit himself without doubt to Providence. It was my habit, in the years 1800 and 1801, to attend a monthly meeting of prayer, for the revival and spread of religion. Our number sometimes did not exceed twenty or thirty. Still, a collection was taken for missionary purposes, and, as most of us were very poor, our contributions did not greatly exceed the widow's mite. On one occasion, as I have heard from Dr. Patten, however, a hundred-dollar bill appeared in the box. Dr. Hopkins had received the same for the copyright of one of his books; and he made this offering at a time when he received next to no salary, and often, as I understood, depended for his dinner on the liberality of a parishioner.

"His views of the Divine agency and sovereignty were utterly irreconcilable with human freedom. He one day said to me, that he did not see how a man could be more *active*, or (as I understood him) more a free agent, than in being *pleased with a thing;* and in the last sermon I heard from him, he insisted that nothing was necessary to responsibility

but that a man should do as he pleased. The origin of the pleasure or volition was of no importance.

"His preaching can only be understood by one who had heard him. His voice was most untunable. Some of the tones approached those of a cracked bell more nearly than anything to which I can compare it. He changed from a low to a high key, and the reverse, with no apparent reason. His manner was without animation. His matter, as far as I can trust my memory, was not made acceptable by any adaptation to the taste of the hearer. He had exercised the severer faculties of his mind too much to give a fair chance to the imagination. He had no relish for poetry; and spoke of himself as finding no attraction in Milton or Shakspeare. If his style was clear and strong, he owed these qualities to his habits of thought, and not to any study of the best writers. We cannot wonder then that he was a very uninteresting preacher. He sometimes ascribed the unfruitfulness of his ministry to other causes, and seemed to see in it a judgment on himself. But a minister who has not the gift to win attention, should see no mystery in his failing to do good. Dr. Hopkins was a student—not a preacher. His mind was habitually employed in investigation, and he never studied the art of communication. With an unharmonious voice, with no graces of manner or style, and with a disposition to bring forward abstract and unpalatable notions, is it wonderful that he did so little in the pulpit?

"His preaching had much *naiveté*, when he descended from his abstractions. He used to speak without circumlocution, and in a plain, conversational way. Once, in preaching at Dr. Patten's, he spoke of the 'loaves and fishes' as what men were still running after; and his simple, blunt manner provoked a smile from some of his younger hearers. He saw it, and said, 'You may smile, but it is true.'

"He was an intense student. I have learned that he studied fourteen hours a day. He told me that once he allowed himself only four hours' sleep. His study was visible from my father's house, and I recollect that, rising very early one winter morning, I saw the light of his candle streaming through the window. He took little exercise. His frame was very strong, or he must have sunk under his labours.

"He was facetious in conversation. I preached for him once; and after the service in the pulpit, he smiled on me and said, 'The *hat* is not made yet.' On my asking an ex-

planation, he told me that Dr. Bellamy used to speak of theology as a progressive science, and compare the different stages of it to the successive processes of *making a hat.* The beaver was to be born, then to be killed, and then the felt to be made, &c. Having thus explained the similitude, he added, 'The hat is not made, and I hope you will help to finish it.'

"His views of the times were dark. I one day told him that he must feel encouraged by the many revivals which were taking place. He replied, that these would only continue the existence of the church, but that great trials were to be expected before its triumphs. He gave a great deal of thought to prophecy, and was supposed to have a peculiar gift for its interpretation; how justly I cannot say.

"Like most of the ministers of the time, he was a strong Federalist, and was greatly grieved by the political heresy of his deacon, almost his only male church-member, whom, however, he did not spare, though in losing him he would have lost the only officer of the church.

"He was a man of perfect honesty, and he loved honesty in others. I remember his giving me an account of a council, at which he assisted, for ordination of a candidate who had received liberal opinions on religion. The young man made no secret of his views, which were exceedingly offensive to several of the council. He answered the questions which were put to him with entire frankness; and I recollect the smile of complacency with which Dr. Hopkins spoke of his honesty, while dissenting from his opinions.

"Dr. Patten told me, what I did not observe, that he attached more and more importance to his opinions as he grew old, and that he bore opposition less patiently, though Dr. Patten, who was his disciple, thought him not at all excessive in this particular. I remember hearing of a severe rebuke he administered to a Methodist minister for his errors. One day, Dr. Hopkins met at the public library a singular man named Stuart, or Stewart, sometimes called 'the walking philosopher,' in consequence of his having travelled over a good part of the world on foot. Stuart was a man of much kindness, too kind to lay his weight on a horse, or to eat animal food, or even to kill a musquito, when sucking his blood; but he was an atheist, and let drop some expression of his opinions before Dr. Hopkins. The Doctor was moved to indignation, and cried out, 'You fool! were it not for God, you could not move a step from where you stand.' Stuart

replied calmly to Dr. Patten, who was present, 'The old gentleman seems disturbed.'

"Dr. Patten told me that Dr. Hopkins was doubtful as to the reality of his religion. He clung to the decrees, though, for aught he knew, he might himself be decreed to endless misery. I suspect, however, that his doubt was like that which men feel as to their living through the day. He was habitually cheerful, though I once saw him in what seemed to me deep dejection. I was with him the day after he was seized with his last sickness. A minister present prayed with him, and for the continuance of his life. When the prayer was finished, Dr. Hopkins said something to this effect:—'You should not have asked for my life. I can do nothing more. It is time for me to go.' He could not at that moment have been distressed by doubts. Perhaps these were the last words I heard from him.

"These are very unimportant reminiscences, but I felt bound to contribute what I could to his biography. The prominent light in which Dr. Hopkins is to be placed is that of a student seeking the glory of God and the spread of true religion, by purifying the common faith of its errors, and unfolding the Christian system in its harmony and true proportions. He had many qualities fitting him for a reformer, —great singleness of purpose, invincible patience of research, sagacity to detect and courage to expose errors, a thirst for consistency of views, and resolution to carry out his principles to their legitimate consequences. I consider him as having contributed largely to the more rational form in which Calvinism is held among us. I cannot judge in what proportions this credit is to be divided between him and President Edwards, and I shall be pleased to be enlightened on this point in your biography. I indeed shrink with a feeling approaching horror from some of his doctrines; but do not on that account withhold the reverence due to his character."

The generous and discriminating notice of Dr. Hopkins given by Dr. Channing, in his sermon at the Dedication of the Unitarian Church in Newport,* should be read in connexion with these reminiscences by all who would fully understand the relation between this venerable man and his young friend. He there says:—"I need not be ashamed to confess the deep impression which his system made on my

* Works, Vol. IV., p. 341

youthful mind. I am grateful to this stern teacher for turning my thoughts and heart to the claims and majesty of impartial, universal benevolence."

In December, 1801, Mr. Channing was elected to the office of Regent in Harvard University, a situation in every way most desirable, as it gave him support while pursuing his studies,—exacted only the slight duty of preserving order in the building where he resided, and of exercising a general superintendence over the young men,—brought him into the immediate neighbourhood of the valuable library of the college,—and, though separating him from his family, reunited him to his elder brother. He returned to Cambridge in the early part of the year 1802; and his appearance, manner, and character at this period are thus described by his college friend, Judge White:—

"At that time, I remember, my impression was, that a greater change had passed over him during the few years of his absence, than I was prepared to expect. Instead of the firm, elastic step and animated manner which used to distinguish him, he appeared somewhat debilitated by ill health, and was more remarkable than formerly for gentleness, and a serious air and tone of conversation. I had thought of him as peculiarly qualified for eminence in the legal profession, and was struck with some surprise, on finding that he had no ambition for any such distinction. But I soon perceived how much more elevated was his ambition. His whole soul was engaged in the sacred studies to which he had devoted himself, and he at once showed that he had already become what St. Paul charged Timothy to be,—'an example in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.' His wisdom, goodness, and sanctity, as well as his genius and intellectual powers, were strongly developed; and I began to feel in his company, what only increased upon me afterwards, a mingled affection and respect, approaching to awe, which the presence of no other man ever inspired in the same degree.

"In the spring vacation of that year, being myself connected with the University, I had the measles badly at my room in college, and I have always remembered him as a comforting angel in my forlorn condition. As expressed by me at the time,—'I suffered nothing from want of attention, &c. William Channing watched with me, besides bringing

me nice things as proofs of the ladies' remembrance. He has himself all the softness and delicacy of manner in attending to the sick which would become a woman.' This but feebly represents the impression which his tender and assiduous care made upon me, and which I could never forget. A China cup, in which he brought some of the 'nice things,' being left at my room, has been preserved as a precious memorial of his kindness, and is still among the first objects to greet my eye in the morning, and to awaken delightful associations connected with him,—associations which can hardly fail to have a salutary influence through the day. The agreeable and generous manner in which all his favours were conferred added to their intrinsic value a charm which made the remembrance of them peculiarly grateful. Such instances of kindness, however common they may have been, are worthy of notice, as illustrations of his character, and of the genuineness and extent of his benevolence. He always seemed actuated by the same sincere and elevated Christian love, manifesting it in his whole manner, and in all his social intercourse, extending the same cordial greeting to those who were entitled to it, whether he met them in solitude or in society, among the humble, or in the presence of high dignitaries. The imposing presence of official greatness, which might make some persons forgetful of humbler friends, never appeared to influence him in the slightest degree. His own great mind was above the ordinary effect of such circumstances, and it cost him no effort to be faithful to his convictions of the inherent dignity of man's nature, and to carry out his principles in all his conduct."

In relation to his theological studies, and the opportunities offered to him at Harvard, the same friend gives the following account:—

"When he was pursuing his professional studies at the University, we must remember that his advantages were very different from those now enjoyed there by the students in divinity. At that time the means of theological instruction were comparatively meagre; yet they were doubtless superior to what could be expected from the tuition of any clergyman unconnected with the University, and greater to Mr. Channing than to other resident graduates engaged in the like studies. President Willard, I well remember, in speaking of the Regent's office, told me that one of his views in recom-

mending its establishment was to afford an eligible situation for some worthy student in divinity, who might be induced by it to pursue his studies at Cambridge. I have no doubt that Mr. Channing found it an eligible situation, and with his peculiar qualifications for self-direction, and his strong turn of mind for an independent course of study and inquiry, that he made greater proficiency than is now common, even with distinguished scholars, who enjoy the higher privileges afforded by the Theological Institution. President Willard and Professor Tappan, both of them able and learned divines, were constantly accessible for advice and assistance, in addition to the interesting public lectures of the latter, who was then also delivering his course upon the Jewish Antiquities."

Of Professor Tappan, the Rev. Dr. Pierce writes as follows:—

"You may know Mr. Channing's opinion of him by the fact, that he had him to preach his ordination sermon. He was considered a moderate Calvinist, which the Rev. John Dippon of Taunton used to say 'is a contradiction in terms.' Dr. Tappan was as impartial a divine as I ever knew, extremely cautious not to prepossess the minds of his pupils, and always exhorting them to judge for themselves. It is well known that there was a strong mutual attachment between the professor and his distinguished pupil. Dr. Tappan was not only one of the most popular divines who entered our pulpits, but such men as George Cabot, Fisher Ames, Judge Lowell, did not hesitate to pronounce him one of the best preachers of the day."

Judge White thus continues:—

"The College library, with others to which Mr. Channing had access, afforded the books which he needed, and which no one better than himself knew how to use. He read them for knowledge and for truth, not to form or confirm opinions. No writers had authority with him in matters of faith beyond the force of their evidence and arguments. I still remember the freedom of his remarks and criticisms on works of high reputation, by the impression they gave me of his independence of mind in judging for himself. The celebrated Dr. Hopkins, of Newport, founder of the system of divinity which then bore his name, seemed to have more authority with him than any other divine, but I am satisfied it was

rather owing to the influence of his virtues than to the weight of his opinions."

Mr. Channing's course of theological studies is not known. Obviously, however, it could not have been such as would now be considered at all thorough, for the new era in theology opened by the great students of Germany had scarcely dawned,—and with the few good books at his command he must have received but slight guidance in the "enchanted wood, where it is hard to distinguish truth from falsehood, and whose maze requires more than an Ariadne's clew," as Jortin well said of ecclesiastical history.* But his general impressions of English theology, formed undoubtedly *in part* at that period,—though, as will be perceived, some of the works spoken of have been published since that time,—may be learned from the following letter, written long subsequently to a German friend. These brief criticisms, which are but a confirmation of thoughts already expressed by him in his Review of Fénelon,† will give the best, though confessedly a very imperfect, notion of his taste and judgment in theological literature. Plainly he found but little satisfaction in the writers to whom he had access.

"I fear you think I have forgotten my promise to send you a list of the best theological works in our language. But the task is more difficult than you imagine. Had you asked for a catalogue of the most prominent commentators and polemics, I could have furnished it at once. But you wanted, if I understood you, to know something of those writers who had given such enlarged views of Christianity as an enlightened and philosophic mind might read with interest and profit, and such writers are not very common.

"English theology seems to me, on the whole, of little worth. An established church is the grave of intellect. To impose a fixed, unchangeable creed, is to raise prison-walls around the mind; and when the reception of this creed is made a condition of dignities and rich benefices, it produces moral as well as intellectual degradation, and palsies the conscience as much as it fetters thought. Once make antiquity a model for all future ages, and fasten on the mind a system too sacred for examination, and beyond which it must not stray, and in extinguishing its hope of progress

* Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, Pref., p. vi.

† Works, Vol. I., pp. 167–174.

you take away its life. One almost wonders that the intellect has advanced as far and as fast as it has done, when one considers the war waged against it by civil and ecclesiastical power, and the heavy chain under which it has been compelled to move. I conceive that the tameness, frigidness, and dulness by which theological writings are so generally marked are to be attributed chiefly to the cause now stated. The intellect, paralyzed by authority and established creeds, has discovered less energy in treating that sublimest and most exciting of all subjects, *religion*, than in discussing the most ordinary interests of the present life. In England, the Established Church has been a dozing place to minds which anywhere else would have signalized themselves; and unhappily Dissent in that kingdom began in a bigoted attachment to Calvinism, which, by exciting the mind, did occasionally call forth much energy of thought, but which still, by infusing unjust and degrading views of God and of human nature, may be regarded as on the whole unfavourable to the progress of intellect. I think, therefore, that there is little in English theology to repay the attention or meet the wants of an enlightened mind. You will not often find broad views of Christianity, showing its harmony with human nature, and with the great laws of the universe, as far as we understand them, and its tendency to secure the true perfection of the individual and the race. You will seldom find that union of reason and enthusiasm, without which a system is essentially defective in correspondence to the human soul. Still, there are powerful thinkers in this department of literature, as in all others; and I will name to you a few books which I think will interest you.

"Butler's Analogy is one of the noblest productions of the mind, and deserves to stand at the head of the list; and his Sermons, although too abstruse for that species of composition, are among the finest ethical discussions. Lardner's Credibility is a work of immense labour and research, distinguished by accuracy, candour, and sagacity, but too voluminous for a general reader. You will find an abstract of it in Paley's Evidences, the best view, I presume, in any language, of the proofs of our religion. Paley's Horæ Paulinæ is, perhaps, the most original work on the evidences of Christianity of our times, being strictly a discovery where nothing original was expected, and furnishing an argument which derives strength from the very circumstance of

its long concealment. To these books on the proofs of Christianity may be added Campbell on Miracles, Douglas's Criterion, Watson's Answers to Gibbon and Paine, Priestley's Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever, Priestley's Sermon on the Resurrection, and Robert Hall's Sermon on Infidelity. In this connexion Farmer on Miracles deserves to be read, and his book on Demoniacs bears on the same subject. Campbell's translation of the Gospels, and especially the preliminary dissertations, are highly and justly valued. Wakefield's translation of the New Testament is in high repute. Law's Theory of Religion is the best view I know of the history and progress of religion. The second volume of Hartley's Observations on Man is on the whole an admirable work, disfigured, indeed, by a gross mechanical philosophy of the mind, but full of useful and exalting views of religion and duty. Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity is worthy of its author, being chiefly intended to show the essential objects of Christian faith, or what that faith is which, as far as opinion or speculation is concerned, constitutes a man a Christian, and to refute indirectly the common sectarian notions on this subject. We have produced in this country a metaphysician, Edwards, whose work on the Will has seldom, if ever, been surpassed in acuteness. He was the advocate of necessity. The doctrine of free-will has found a very able advocate in Dr. Samuel Clarke. Newcome's Observations on the Character of our Lord is not a work of genius, but is one of the best summaries of Christ's teaching, and gives a minute analysis of his character. Lowth's Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, though written originally in Latin, belongs to English literature, and was thought worthy of a commentary by Michaelis.

"Under the head of Christian evidences, I forgot a work by our countryman, Mr. Verplanck, which I think has great merit. I find, on looking back, too, that I have omitted two other authors on this subject, who are worthy your attention, —Leland on the 'Necessity of Revelation,' valuable for its learning, and 'Chalmers' Evidences,' a book very deficient in comprehensive views of the subject, but singularly forcible in illustrating particular branches of it.

"The best sermons are those of Jeremy Taylor, Barrow, Sherlock, Horsley, Price, Robert Hall, and Buckminster of this country. In Sherlock you will find an able exposition of scepticism, as it manifested itself in his age.

"In practical theology the most striking work which I remember is Law's Serious Call to a Holy Life,—a book of ascetic character, and smelling of the cloister, but often forcible in its appeals, and original in its illustrations. Two books of a miscellaneous character deserve to be mentioned;—'Price's Dissertations' and 'John Foster's Essays;' the former uniting with strong and just thinking a mild, serene, exalted piety,—and the latter, though perhaps repulsive to a foreigner by frequent involutions and obscurities of style, yet abounding in felicities and energies of expression, as well as in fresh and vigorous conception.

"I have said nothing of three authors of great name,—Hooker, the author of 'Ecclesiastical Polity,' 'Cudworth,' whose chief work is entitled 'The Intellectual System of the Universe,' and Chillingworth, the champion of Protestantism against the Catholics. The truth is,—though I almost blush to acknowledge it,—I have not read them, and know them only by report.

"The Puritans, from whom we of New England are descended, boast of three writers who would do honour to any cause,—Howe, Owen, and Baxter; but their works, though furnishing proofs of great power and deep piety, are too disfigured by a technical theology to be read much except by professed theologians.

"Coleridge has just formed a book of extracts from Leighton's works, accompanied by notes from himself; and should the work ever appear, I doubt not that it will be very valuable; for Coleridge's genius is known to you, and Leighton was a rare union of learning, imagination, and a celestial spirit.

"I am sorry that I have not been able to speak more favourably of English theology; and I wish you to understand, that the opinion of the majority is against me, and that were I to publish what I have written, I should be charged with gross injustice. But I must write what I believe."

A friend, who was much with Mr. Channing at the period of his life which we are now considering, has the impression, that his time was more occupied in writing than in reading. And his remaining papers give every reason to believe that he had already formed his peculiar habit of following out a train of thought pen in hand. Writing was with him, as he often said, the one great means of making clear to himself

his own thoughts. New suggestions were noted; contradictory views placed side by side; qualifications and exceptions carefully stated under the admitted principles to which they referred; broad, general views given of whole subjects; particular conclusions succinctly recorded; and thus gradually, from a main root, a whole series of truths branched out and divided itself into its large classifications and minuter bearings. He early acquired these habits of methodical thinking; and all principles and facts grouped themselves into an order, which was the farthest possible from a mere mechanical arrangement, and which was ever unfolding under the organizing power of his spirit. This exactness of mind should be carefully heeded by all who would trace aright Mr. Channing's after progress as a theologian, and a religious and social reformer. For what might often have seemed to those little acquainted with the laws of his inward nature like timidity or slowness was actually but the working of his unappeasable desire to obtain such a view of any subject as should have coherent wholeness in itself, and be in unity with other views which he regarded as established. Already he was thus cautiously and patiently investigating the great problems,—as to the Divine Being and Character,—Human Nature, its destiny and duties,—Christ and Christianity,—society and its various relations,—to the solution of which his after-life was consecrated. Already he had reached the fountain-head of those rivers of thought, whose course he was to explore and trace to their mouths. And the truly important part of his theological education was this process of spiritual discipline, by which he was learning to concentrate his whole energy of will and thought upon sublime objects, until they inspired him with their grandeur, filled him with new desires for good, enlarged his powers of feeling and comprehension, fixed his reverent regard, and, through doubts and hopes, perplexities and mental conflicts, brought him up at length to the mount of vision, and to intercourse with God and the supernatural world. It was a process in which piety, conscientiousness, scientific thinking, imagination, humanity, and love of beauty were blended, to lift him into communion with spiritual realities. A distinct intuition of these spiritual realities, and an abiding consciousness of the mysterious yet substantial, awful at once and loving ministries, by which man's existence upon earth is enveloped and pervaded, were the one result of his inward training

which made him so influential as a religious teacher. He had attained to that living, transforming, renewing faith, whose principle is Divine love working in us,—whose fruit is love to man.

No authors probably aided him much in this travailing to give birth to great thoughts conceived by the spirit. But two of the writers mentioned in the foregoing letter were so often and so gratefully referred to by him,—besides Hutcheson, Ferguson, and Price, whose influence has already been described,—as to prove that they did something to determine at this period the current of his thoughts. The first, and by far the most useful to him, was Butler, whose "Sermons on Human Nature" he regarded as unsurpassed in English for clear, full, condensed thought, and to which may be traced, perhaps, the germs of some of his most important views. And the second was Law, whose mystic piety and earnest longing for spiritual perfection touched harmoniously many chords of his religious sympathy, although he felt that his temper was in other respects gloomy and narrow. He spoke with much regard, also, of Edwards, whose energy of intellect he greatly admired, while denying the soundness of his doctrine of necessity, and utterly rejecting its conclusions; many of whose writings he thought suggestive of deeply interesting views of the spiritual relations between the Divine Being and man, while he was horror-struck at the theology of others; and whose sketch of his conversion he once read in part to a friend, with a voice trembling in its tenderness and eyes softened with emotion, as being one of the most pathetic and beautiful sketches ever given of the deeper workings of the soul.*

His habits as a student may be partially illustrated by the following extracts from his private manuscripts of that period. They show the earnestness with which he was seeking to control his intellect and to direct it to the highest objects.

"It is easy to read, but hard to think. Without thinking, we cannot make the sentiments of others our own. Thinking alone adopts them into our family. It is my misfortune, that I have read much, but have reflected little. Let me reverse this order. I prefer strength of impression to superficial knowledge, however extensive."

"We are very apt to think we have ideas, when we have only words. We mistake synonymes for definitions. I have

* Edwards's Works, Vol. I., p. 35.

often found rich ideas by analyzing words, particularly when they are metaphorical. Words should never be used in a loose sense. We are apt to be led astray by imperfect analogies, particularly in reasoning on the nature of Deity. It has been well observed, that, when beginning a subject, we should consider the degree of evidence to which we should yield our assent."

"In pursuit of truth, I should possess indefatigable patience and invincible perseverance. Have I not embraced errors to avoid the toil of inquiry? Let me read no enfeebling productions, but such poetry and works of fancy only as will tend to strengthen the purposes and elevate the feelings of my soul. I wish to acquire a calm energy, a strong principle of love and independence. Let me kindle a fire in my heart at the altars of religion, benevolence, and nature."

"I often find my mind confused; a thousand indistinct ideas distract it. In such cases, it would be best to snap the chain of thought at once, to leave my books for a season, and to return back to the first step of the argument. In all my studies, I should pray for the Divine blessing. There are periods, when the mind is indisposed to serious study, when it sympathises with a suffering body, when its tone is destroyed, and its powers require relaxation. But we should distinguish natural infirmity from that indolence which grows by indulgence, and which one vigorous exertion would drive away. It is desirable, and I think it possible, to acquire a conquest over the former weaknesses of nature. May we not form a habit of attention which pain itself cannot distract? Do I not too often apologize for indolence, by attributing it to bodily indisposition? Let me check that roving habit, which I have indulged, of reading a thousand trifles,— a habit by which the tone of the mind is destroyed, until we turn with loathing from wholesome studies. Regularity and order are essential; and when I have formed a plan, let me submit to many inconveniences rather than swerve from it."

"I have hitherto confused my mind by indiscriminate reading. I wish to obtain clearness of conception, a simple mode of considering objects. I should be careful at first in separating from a subject everything foreign to it, and place it in as distinct a light as possible. After I have left my books for relaxation, I must ease my mind of a load of thought, and leave it to calm enjoyment.

"It is always best to think first for ourselves on any subject, and then to have recourse to others for the correction or improvement of our own sentiments. Thus we may reach truth, which we should never have observed, had we caught a particular mode of thinking from any author. No principles should be received from education and habit merely. Let me observe, before perusing the opinions of observers. We check original thought by first learning how and what to think from others. The strength of others should be called in only to assist our weakness, not to prevent the exertion of our own powers. By means of this dependence on books, error, as well as truth, descends in hereditary succession. The sources of original thought are dried up, and the mind is overflowed by foreign streams derived through channels which other men have formed. Self-dependence in science is the road to useful truth. The quantity of knowledge thus gained may be less, but the quality will be superior. Truth received on authority, or acquired without labour, makes but a feeble impression."

"Whenever hypotheses are to be formed, let me first set down the facts on which they must be grounded, and weigh them carefully. It would be advisable to form a blank book merely for the insertion of those truths to which I assent; and it would be useful to revise whatever I have hitherto taken for granted, and judge it impartially. Let me beware, lest a love of originality lead me astray. Ambition is as fatal as prejudice. Love of truth is the only principle which should influence us; and those truths which will have influence on life are alone worthy of present attention. I was born for action. My object is to do good to the world by promoting the cause of religion, as well as to advance myself in religion. A life of constant action and unwearied exertion excludes universal knowledge. The improvement of the heart is infinitely more important than the enlargement of the understanding. I hope for immortality in heaven, not immortal fame on earth. I therefore wish to have a few important truths impressed deeply on my mind, rather than to be lost in that chaos of universal knowledge which has hitherto distracted me. Knowledge is only a means. Let me not make it the end. Abstruse speculations on useless subjects will but waste my time."

"As I find myself full of prejudices on the subject of

government and politics, I will lay them aside for a year; and let me not even talk on them, except with intimate friends. History I will lay aside for the same time. Let me learn to be silent on subjects where I am ignorant."

"I must be very careful, lest, when my heart is warmed, I should be disposed to receive without examination the errors of enthusiasm for Christian truth. I fear that I am prejudiced in favour of some doctrines, and there is danger of my bending Scripture to my preconceived opinions. Let me always pray for impartiality, and strive to read without prejudice. I should also try to acquire a spirit of moderation from the Bible, instead of that narrowness of sentiment which is creeping upon me. Let me study Scripture without any ambitious views of striking out a new system, or of shining by ingenuity. Plain truth is worth far more than the splendid speculations of philosophical divines."

"Conversation on religious subjects will be highly improving, if I keep my heart open to conviction, if I strive to obtain truth, if I can listen with patience and without interrupting the speaker, and if I feel a desire to learn and not to shine. In these conversations I must not make a show of my religion, and of my religious feelings. I must make no noise about my experience; and, in fact, it would be best to omit the word 'I' in discourse."

"I am so much afraid of being led astray by human systems, that I wish to conform myself wholly to the Bible. Let me read it with the docility and simplicity of a child, sensible of my blindness, and praying for light. Let me be fearless of consequences in pursuing the truth, and strive to keep in view the connexion which binds together the sacred writings. Let me read them, not with a view to speculate, but to learn the will of my Lord and Master. Let me contemplate his character, have his example ever before my eyes, learn of his life as well as of his words, and strive to be assimilated to so perfect a model. Let me impress my mind with the importance of the Scriptures, with their superior value to human learning, and let me make a practical use of every part of them."

"I should endeavour to form my mode of preaching, as well as of thinking, on the Scriptures. Every sect has its *cant*, and there is danger of being blindly led by it. Let me strive to discover the errors of the party or sect to which I

belong. Indiscriminate approbation is a sure step to error. Adherence to *principles*, and not to *men*, should separate me from all *parties*."

But already Mr. Channing's efforts were checked, and his spirits damped, by that state of half-health, which did so much during the whole of his early manhood to repress his native ardour and probably to overcast his firmament of thought, though it could never subdue his elastic will and truly heroic conscience. To his grandfather Ellery he thus describes his trials:—

"Perhaps it is fortunate for you that I have not written. A kind of stupefaction, of mental inactivity, has seized on me. A weight of dulness has oppressed all my faculties. My understanding and imagination have been buried under a cloud, my feelings deadened, and every spring of action relaxed. I feel but little interest in anything, and yet I am not at ease. This insensibility is morbid, the effect of disease, an unnatural state of the mind, a violence on its powers and energies. I do not act or feel, yet my sluggishness is not voluntary. I am hemmed in,—I am fettered. Like Enceladus, I groan under the mountain. I labour to remove it; but still, still it weighs on my breast, and seems to press heavier after every struggle. In fact, my late complaint has had more to do with the mind than the body, or rather the body has been affected in such a manner as peculiarly to affect the mind."

Amidst this bodily and mental depression, making a path for himself between scepticism on the one side, and a gloomy theology on the other, slowly winning his way to peace and light, delicately conscientious, eager for unobscured views, aspiring with the intense enthusiasm of a highly ideal temperament after perfect good, he found the refreshment he so much needed in the society of his elder brother, whose sweet, tender, glad, and poetic spirit formed with his a beautiful accord. Their leisure hours were passed together in most unreserved intimacy; while sometimes they followed the paths which wound through the then unbroken woods of Mount Auburn, or overlooked the wide panorama from Prospect Hill, and sometimes wore away the night beside the embers on their student's hearth. Then, and ever after, they stood in mutual relations of transparent confidence, and were united by that devoted friendship which, next after

communion with the Divine Spirit, and the love of a true marriage, is the holiest tie in life. Francis thus writes :— "A word of our dear William. You know not how happy I feel in such a brother. He is a bright light in the world; he illumines, he animates, he points the way."

Near the close of his theological studies, Mr. Channing was admitted as "a member in full communion of the First Church of Christ in Cambridge," which was at that time under the charge of the Rev. Dr. Abiel Holmes, who, in theology, was a "moderate Calvinist," and as a man was highly respected for unpretending piety and uprightness. The doctrinal opinions which he at this time entertained are embodied, though not very distinctly, in some articles of faith which he appears to have prepared for his own use. It would seem that his views were such as would then have been called Arian, but strongly tinged with opinions derived from Dr. Hopkins. Where, however, language generally current at any era is used as in this paper, it is difficult to form a clear conception of the writer's real meaning; creeds serving to conceal minds, much as fashionable garments do forms, and both hiding distinctive features under uniformity of appearance. Yet there are particular expressions in these articles of faith, which are suggestive of the writer's later doctrines; and the whole paper is interesting, in enabling one to see the misty valley from which he made his toilsome ascent to serener heights. Do we of a later day sufficiently appreciate the painful struggles by which our spiritual fathers have led us up through shadow into sunshine ?

At this time, as through life, Mr. Channing kept aloof from sectarian entanglements, for by instinct he dreaded, as much as from principle he disapproved, all fetters upon free thought. But it certainly is not strange that one, holding such opinions as he has recorded, should have been supposed to have a leaning towards Orthodoxy, as from the following communication it appears was the case :—

"He received the usual approbation to preach, I think," says Dr. Pierce, "from the Cambridge Association. As there was then no Divinity School, and he was peculiarly cautious about committing himself on points of difference among Christians; as he was also supposed to be in familiar correspondence with his grandfather Ellery, who had the reputation of Orthodoxy of the Hopkins stamp, suspicions were entertained by some that he himself would enlist on

that side. So thought some of the ministers composing the Association before which he appeared for approbation. For, as he himself told me, the only question proposed to him, after reading his sermon, was by Dr. Stearns of Lincoln,— 'Whether he believed that God was the author of sin?'"

Any doubts as to the actual state of his opinions, however, are put at rest by his own testimony, as given in later years. "There was a time," said he, "when I verged towards Calvinism, for ill health and depression gave me a dark view of things. But the doctrine of the Trinity held me back. When I was studying my profession, and religion was the subject of deepest personal concern with me, I followed Doddridge through his 'Rise and Progress' till he brought me to a prayer to Jesus Christ. There I stopped, and wrote to a friend that my spiritual guide was gone where I could not follow him. I was never in any sense a Trinitarian."

Judge White thus confirms this statement:—

"In a conversation which I had with him, on our way to visit Dr. Osgood, of Medford, about the time he commenced preaching, he spoke of Dr. Hopkins with warm esteem, both as a friend and a theologian, dwelling with particular emphasis on the strong feature of benevolence which marked both his character and his divinity, and observing very pointedly, that 'those who were called Hopkinsians, and considered his followers, appeared to know little of him or of his true theological views.' With all his esteem for his friend Dr. Hopkins, he had no sympathy with these supposed followers, or with their leading opinions. His not manifesting an open and zealous concurrence with any particular sect or denomination, together with the deep seriousness of his religious impressions, might have given him something of an Orthodox reputation; but I am persuaded that he was neither more nor less entitled to it at that time than at any subsequent period of his life; for he was distinguished then, as ever afterwards, for his devotion to truth and for the spirit of free inquiry."

Mr. Channing began to preach in the autumn of 1802, being then in his twenty-third year.

"I find in my register for 1802," writes Judge White, "the following memorandum against October 24:—'Medford. Spent the Sunday and heard Brother Channing for the first time preach;'—and I have even now a distinct recollection of

our interview with Dr. Osgood, at his house, where we dined, and of the gratification I experienced at hearing him express the most decided approbation of the discourse, and speak of the young preacher's whole services and manner in the kindest terms of sympathy and commendation. Having been intimately acquainted with Dr. Osgood, and knowing how frankly he expressed his real opinion, I felt some solicitude till he had spoken, and was the more gratified by what he said. Yet he did not express himself so strongly as he did afterwards, in the absence of Mr Channing. I know that he regarded him as a young preacher of extraordinary gifts, and of the highest promise in his profession. I mention this more particularly, having seen it erroneously stated in the "Christian Register," I think by an anonymous writer, that his early performance was not thus promising. My expectations, which had been high, were fully realized when I first heard him. There was the same charm in his sentiments and tones of voice which I ever after experienced from his preaching. Indeed, to me he always appeared essentially the same, though always advancing; and the chief difference between his early and later preaching seemed to arise from his greater freedom, energy, and earnestness, both of spirit and manner, as he advanced in his profound views of religion and humanity."

His preaching at once attracted attention for its fervour, solemnity, and beauty. The power of his look and tone, so expressive of a soul that overflowed with spiritual life, won the hearts of his hearers, and was felt as evidence that he spoke with the authority of experience. A person who heard his first sermon, on the text, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee," in which he described the large range of benevolent action open to every human being, however situated, describes his manner as singularly "radiant and full of heavenly joy." The general admiration felt for his spirit and genius is proved by the fact, that he was immediately asked to preach in Boston, Massachusetts, as a candidate for settlement, by the Society in Brattle-street, and by the Society in Federal-street. The Rev. Dr. Thacher, pastor of the Brattle-street congregation, being quite infirm, was beginning to feel the need of a colleague; and the leading men among his people were exceedingly desirous that Mr. Channing should be elected to fill this office. They consulted with him freely in relation to the proposed arrange-

ment, and gave him their assurance, that he would receive the invitation of the Society to become their associate pastor, if he would once more preach before them. He returned to Newport to rest and recruit, however, without giving them a definite answer.

Meanwhile, the Society in Federal-street had been so strongly attracted towards Mr. Channing, that they hastened at once to request him to settle with them, and deputed Deacon Francis Wright to wait upon him with the following "call":—

"Boston, December 29th, 1802.

"DEAR SIR,—When a committee of the religious society in Federal-street lately made application to you to preach on probation, they were influenced not merely by their own united opinions, but by their persuasion of the dispositions and wishes of the society which they represented.

"It is gratifying to find that in this persuasion they were not mistaken, but that the society have received such satisfaction from your ministration among them, and have such a conviction of your character and accomplishments, that they were prepared for a more decisive expression of their approbation. At a full meeting of the society, holden on the 28th instant, they voted to invite you to become their pastor, and have assigned to us the grateful office of presenting to you their invitation.

"Their votes, which we enclose, will inform you of the provision which they offer for your support.

"In determining on the compensation which it would be proper for them to propose, the society have been governed by serious, and, they hope, liberal views of the charge which they request you to undertake. They are sensible what profound reflection and laborious inquiry the sacred office requires; and it is their wish and intention, that the mind devoted to such high engagements should, as far as may be practicable, be undisturbed by solicitudes and embarrassment from the cares of life.

"In this interesting transaction there has been great unanimity. Four only of the whole society expressed any indecision on the subject. Two of those, from absence, had not had equal opportunity with the rest of the society to form a satisfactory judgment. All the four so far concurred in the favourable sentiments entertained by the society in general, that they wished to hear you further; with a laudable

deference to the general sentiment, they excused themselves from giving a voice on the question, and signified their disposition to acquiesce in the decision of their brethren.

"We have thus the satisfaction to present you the desires of a united people, and cannot but express a hope that this invitation, and the proposals accompanying it will be acceptable to you. Such a result we shall consider as a blessing of Heaven on the society and its members, and all with whom they are tenderly connected.

"Any explanations or further communications from us, which may be considered necessary, we shall cheerfully offer on request; for this purpose a personal interview would be agreeable to us, but the distance and the season of the year would render it inconvenient for the committee to repair to Newport. If it should be convenient to you, before your proposed return to this vicinity, to be at Providence or Bristol, some of the committee would have the pleasure of meeting you at either of those places, at such time as you shall specify.

"In the name and behalf of the society, we remain,

"Respectfully with great regard,

"Your friends and obedient servants,

"Francis Wright,
Henry Hunter,
Thomas Davis,
John Davis,
Simon Elliot.
Russell Sturgis,
Edward Tuckerman, jun.,
Committee.

"Mr. William E. Channing."

Together with this call, Mr. Channing received persuasive appeals from many friends, advising him to preach again, as requested, at Brattle-street. But Dr. Thacher was now dead; and feeling that he was at once too ill and too inexperienced to discharge alone the duties in so large a congregation, and that the difficulties incident to the settlement of a colleague with him were great, he determined not to offer himself to that society as a candidate. In his letter he says:—

"I hope that I have not subjected your society to incon-

venience by delaying to this period my answer to their application. A request of such importance required long deliberation. I have considered my decision as one which must seriously affect my whole future life. I have been unwilling, too, to determine without the counsel of my friends; and from a concurrence of opinion, I am constrained to decline the invitation of the church and congregation in Brattle-street to preach before them with a view to settlement.

"I have been for some time in a feeble state of health, and the labour of speaking in your house is so great, that there would be danger of fatal injury. In so numerous a society, also, professional engagements would require great exertions, the fatigues of which might unfit me for that attention to study on which my usefulness must very much depend. It is principally by impressing religious truth, that a minister is instrumental in promoting the happiness of his people; and his own personal discipline is indispensably necessary to a faithful and effectual ministration of the word of God. Hence the importance, not only of health, but of much leisure, especially to one so young and inexperienced as myself. Could I, then, consistently with a regard to the prosperity of the church, and the eternal interests of my hearers, desire a situation which would require efforts disproportioned to my strength, and where the multiplicity of duties would allow but little opportunity for improvement?

"Your society, Sir, has much indeed to recommend it. But do not the very circumstances of your influence and numbers attach high responsibility to the office of your minister, and render experience, improved talents, and insight of character peculiarly necessary? A man of principle should first of all inquire, whether he is capable of performing the duties he is called to undertake; and in calculating his powers, he ought to guard against too high an estimation of them, lest he be led to engage in a sphere to which he is inadequate. My feelings, as well as my reason, recommend for me a more humble sphere; and I have a confidence that you will be no sufferers in consequence of the resolution which I have adopted.

"In thus declining the invitation of the church and congregation in Brattle-street, I am influenced by the highest respect for their character, and a sincere regard for their

most important interests. And may God support and guide them by his grace and power!

"Under a grateful sense of the honour conferred on me by the society which you represent, I remain, with great respect,

"Your obedient servant,

"W. E. CHANNING."

This letter, otherwise unimportant, is inserted as illustrative of the caution with which its writer made up his judgment as to any course of conduct, though he was prompt and resolute in executing his purposes when formed. It shows, too, very clearly his humble estimate of his own abilities, and his conscientious desire to fit himself for efficient service in his vocation. Wisdom and moderation had already become his law.

Mr. Channing was the more inclined to settle at Federal-street, because, while the weakness of that society called out his sympathies, he was hopeful that his health would permit him to meet with fidelity the limited demand which would there be made upon him. So, returning to Boston, he conferred with the committee of the society, and accepted their call in the following letter:—

"*To the Committee of the Religious Society in Federal Street.*

"GENTLEMEN,—I now address you to communicate my acceptance of the invitation of the society in Federal-street, to settle with them as their minister. The character of the society, the favourable disposition they have expressed towards me, and the prospect of usefulness in a situation so well adapted to my present state of health, render this call peculiarly agreeable.

"The proposals you have communicated are entirely satisfactory; and when I consider them as expressive of regard to religion, and originating in a desire to relieve your minister from solicitudes and embarrassments, I accede to them with pleasure. A house was not mentioned, but I view the clause which provided for 'additional compensation in case of an increase of necessary expense,' as an engagement to supply one whenever it may be wanted.

"In settling among you, I shall consider the prosperity of the society as my end and happiness. As an ambassador of Christ, I shall endeavour faithfully to declare those truths which he has revealed in his word, and on which the purity of the church, and the eternal interests of mankind depend.

"Though young and feeble, I am encouraged to form this solemn connexion from a confidence in that candour and affection I have already experienced. I desire your prayers to Almighty God, that he would enable me to perform the important duties of my calling, and that my labours may not be in vain in the Lord.

"With great respect, I remain your sincere friend
"and obedient servant,
"WILLIAM E. CHANNING.

"Boston, February 12, 1803."

His state of mind, at the time of his settlement, is shown by the following extracts from letters written at this period to his uncle, the Rev. Henry Channing:—

"I communicated, some time ago, to the congregation in Federal-street my acceptance of their offers. After much deliberation, I concluded that this situation was best adapted to my strength, and furnished the fairest prospect of usefulness. I requested two months' leisure to prepare myself for the office, in hopes that, in this period, I should be able to determine upon my state of health. The two months have passed. I find myself, on the whole, stronger. I have sufficient strength to perform the duties of the office at present. What may happen I know not. I think, however, when called by the unanimous voice of such a society, I ought not to shrink from the labour because it is possible that my powers may fail. I have fairly laid before the leading gentlemen of the society the doubts I have about my situation. I have told them that I fear that, in the heat of summer, I shall not be able constantly to perform ministerial duty, and that I am willing to defer the ordination to any period, however remote. They, however, think that the interests of the society recommend an immediate settlement. They expect nothing beyond my ability, and are willing that I should call in help, whenever it is needed. Under these circumstances, I think it right to comply. The prosperity of the church should be the great object of pursuit; and even if sacrifices should be necessary, I would willingly make them. But I am disposed to believe that my health will be promoted by this measure. I found that I grew strong by preaching before, and I think that, with means of obtaining aid, I shall not be called to greater exertion than I am able to support.

"The society have mentioned the third Wednesday in

May, the 18th of the month, as most agreeable for the day of ordination. I hope, Sir, you will be present and preach the sermon. Your fatherly goodness is a stronger motive than your near connexion with me, for soliciting this favour. In this most solemn act I wish you to bear a part. You have had no little share in conducting me to the choice of the sacred profession. I ask, I need your advice, direction, and encouragement. No one will feel half the interest you do in my welfare; no other person will bring so much affection to the performance of this part of the solemnity. I know the tenderness of your feelings. I anticipate the emotions which on such a day I shall myself experience. But I trust that religion will solemnize and compose the heart, and I think that from your lips I shall receive the deepest impression of the awful magnitude of my duty as a minister of Christ."

"I have spent the last week in the country, and I hope the fresh air and exercise have strengthened me. Yesterday I preached two sermons of near fifty minutes' length each, and found myself but little exhausted. You may be surprised at my wearisome prolixity. But both the discourses were occasional—one on opening our house of worship, after an interruption of divine service for nearly three months; the other on the death of Mrs. Davis, a most amiable and much beloved woman, and an ornament to the church. I might have said less, and perhaps to more effect; but I have not learnt as yet to repress the ardour of composition. I find it easier to dilate than to compress. . . . . .

"When I see the anxiety of my friends about me, I feel melancholy. Who am I that others should take an interest in me? What are my powers? How little am I able to answer expectation! I almost sink under a sense of my weakness. But I am conscious that pride mingles much in this humiliation, and I find a refuge in the character of God, who has raised me up for his own purposes, and who will make me in all situations an instrument for accomplishing his benevolent designs. . . . . .

"I feel awed in considering the magnitude of the duties soon to devolve upon me. The church of God, purchased with the blood of his Son; the eternal interests of mankind; —what objects are here presented! I ask your prayers, that I may have grace to be faithful."

On Wednesday, June 1st, 1803, Mr. Channing was ordained. The order of services was as follows:—Introductory

prayer by the Rev. Dr. Holmes, of Cambridge; discourse by the Rev. Dr. Tappan, Professor at Harvard University; prayer of consecration by the Rev. Dr. Osgood, of Medford; charge by his uncle, the Rev. Henry Channing, of New London, who had declined preaching the sermon; right hand of fellowship, by his classmate and friend, the Rev. Joseph Tuckerman, of Chelsea.

One who was a devoted parishioner and a warm personal friend in after years, George Ticknor, Esq., has communicated the following sketch of this occasion:—

"My first recollection of Dr. Channing is on the day of his ordination. My father, who was one of the council, led me by the hand, as a small boy; and I went with him in the procession, and sat with him. So far as I now remember, I had never heard of the person to be ordained; and I have still no recollection of anything in the services of the day, till they were about to be concluded. Then the pale, spiritual-looking young man, whose consecration I had witnessed, without really understanding its purport, rose and announced the closing hymn. My attention was immediately fastened on him; and particularly on his visible emotion, when he came to the last stanza:—

> 'My tongue repeats her vows,
> Peace to this sacred house!
> For here my friends and brethren dwell;
> And since my glorious God
> Makes thee his blest abode,
> My soul shall ever love thee well.'

His looks, the tones of his trembling voice, and the devout air with which he repeated rather than read these lines, are still present to me whenever the scene comes up in my thoughts; and, in fact, at the time they so impressed the words themselves on my mind, that I have never forgotten them since. After the hymn had been sung, he rose once more, and in the same tender and devout manner pronounced a very simple benediction. In this, too, I see him still freshly before me, with his upcast eyes, and remember thinking how spiritual he was, and being sad that from his feeble appearance it did not seem as if he would live long."

During the spring and summer, before and after his ordination, Mr. Channing resided at Brookline, in the family of

Stephen Higginson, jun., whose heart, overflowing with benevolence and hospitality, had taken the interests of the young minister under his paternal care, and who, together with his devout and excellent wife—who, though orthodox in views, was liberal in spirit—rejoiced in the saintly purity and rich intelligence of their friend. Here a large library and every convenience for study or relaxation were open to his use; his bodily health was benefited by country air and free exercise amidst the picturesque landscapes of that most beautiful neighbourhood; and his affections found a home.

PART SECOND.

Chap. I — EARLY MINISTRY.

Æt. 23–34. 1803–1814.

It was in his twenty-fourth year that Mr. Channing entered upon his ministerial course in Boston, already fitted by the discipline of life and inward experience to sympathize in the movements of the time and place in which his lot was cast, and destined to lend them efficient aid. But before tracing his relations to that development of spirituality, liberty, love, which it was the mission of his age to promote, let us first observe his growth toward the stature of a perfect man in his closet and home circle, in his parish and immediate neighbourhood. Thus shall we follow down the stream from its mountain springs, which were fed by the rains of heaven.

The family of an estimable parishioner, with whom Mr. Channing at first boarded, remember him at that period as serious in deportment to a degree that was even oppressive. He had the air of one absorbed in his own contemplations, and looked care-worn, weary, and anxious. Society seemed distasteful; he joined but little in conversation; took his meals in haste; was retired in his ways; lived mostly in his study; appeared rather annoyed than pleased with visitors; seldom went abroad—declining, when possible, all invitations; and, in a word, was most content when left uninterruptedly to himself. There was sweetness in his looks and words, however; solemn counsels were gently given, and an atmosphere of holiness threw a winning charm over his conversation and conduct. Undoubtedly, this reserve, the shade of which was deepest in his first entrance upon his duties, and which cleared away as he became more confirmed in goodness and wisdom, was partly owing to his habit of fastening attention upon any subject that interested him, and of brooding over it even while in society and in action—a fault in his regard, of which he early became aware, and which he endeavoured through

his later life to check. In his journals he frequently thus refers to it :—

"A subject has been very injurious to me. It has shut me up in my room till my body has been exhausted, and has led to neglect of my people and family. I must be moderate in everything."

"It will often be useful to fix the number of hours during which I will attend to a subject, and rigidly to adhere to the determination."

"My mode of study destroys me, my health, my piety, my social feelings; and is therefore sinful."

"My long absorption in a subject enfeebles my mind, prevents its free action, casts a cloud over my thoughts, produces a painful anxiety."

"My speculations about the origin of moral feelings, &c., cannot justify a practical neglect of them."

"No subject can be usefully continued beyond a certain time. The mind needs to be recruited. All the motives which impel me to pursue the subject require me to disengage my mind for a season."

"The attainment of truth requires me to be able to continue in a state of doubt until I have had time to examine all the arguments which relate to a point; and this examination, however protracted, if conducted by a love of truth, is virtuous,—approved by conscience and God,—the improvement of my best powers,—an approximation towards God."

"The wretchedness I have suffered on so many topics shows the importance of limiting the period of attention."

"Because doubt spreads itself over one subject I ought not to doubt of all. This will lead to misery. A narrow mind cannot see the connexions between many propositions which are yet supported by sufficient proofs."

"My sleep has been broken by anxiety at not discovering truth."

"Let it be my rule never to carry a subject with me into society. My social duties are in this way neglected."

But his serious manner was chiefly to be traced to profound conscientiousness. Without the elastic spirits which a vigorous tone of body gives, as a power of reaction for the spirit, he bent beneath a feeling of unfitness for the duties of his vocation. To a young friend who was just entering upon the ministry, and who was oppressed by a like sense of responsibility, he once said, "Take courage. I suffered as you

now do. In the early years of my ministry, ill health and a deep consciousness of unworthiness took away my energy and hope, and I had almost resolved to quit my profession. My brother Francis begged me to persevere, to make a fairer trial; and to his influence I owe very much the continuance of labours which, I hope, have not been useless to myself or to others."

A letter written at this time to his uncle Henry well shows how deep his depression was:—

"I have no right to complain of the trials of my ministry. They are small, compared with what thousands of my brethren are called to endure. I can complain of nothing but myself. Every day teaches me more of my weakness and corruption, and yet I seem to grow no better. I hope my hearers are more profited by my discourses than I am, or I shall do little good. I can only hope that God designs to humble me, to make me feel my insufficiency, that he may lead me to ascribe the success of my labours to his blessing, whenever he may please to make them powerful to the salvation of souls."

His painful struggles, and his mode of triumphing over his weakness, are pointed out yet more fully in a letter written many years later to a young brother who had sought his advice:—

"I have passed through too much of your sad experience, to be able to treat it harshly. My own mind has often been ready to sink under like burdens. A merciful Power has sustained me, and I trust that it will sustain you. It is impossible that a man who is at all alive to his moral and religious obligations, should enter on the ministry without many solicitudes, fears, and painful convictions of his distance from the perfection he is to teach. It is impossible for a young man, especially if he has been retired in his habits, to appear in a pulpit,—one of the most conspicuous spots on earth,—and to escape all consciousness of himself, and give himself up with an undivided heart to a work to which he is new, and to which his feelings have been but imperfectly trained. The strongest of all passions, ambition, cannot at once be put to silence, and its inconsistency with the spirit of Christianity and the ministry produces keen self-reproach.

"I tell you here what I suppose all ministers could tell, and I see not how the evil is to be avoided under the present constitution of things. God might have committed his word to the ministry of angels, but this he has not seen fit to do;

he intrusts it to earthen vessels, to frail men, to those who need moral and religious education as truly as their hearers, who reprove themselves in the reproofs they administer to others, and who are to carry others forward by advancing themselves. A deep sense of imperfection and much spiritual conflict are, then, inseparable from the work.

"Your defects do not at all discourage me. I could tell of those who have struggled through the same. I do not mean to deny their existence. The only question is, Do you thirst to be improved? Do you thirst for a generous interest in your fellow-creatures? Do you desire a new power to do good? Have you the principle of progress in you? Of this I cannot doubt, nor can you. That you are not doomed to stop for ever where you are, I know. God is giving you power in your moral nature, in Christianity, in his Holy Spirit, against selfishness, apathy, and corrupt ambition. These can be overcome, and must be, and I know not a vocation in which you can withstand them so effectually as in the ministry. The very pains you have suffered, if they do not palsy you by taking away the hope of change and progress, will do you good. They show you that you are not spiritually dead. They should satisfy you that you have the foundation of great ministerial usefulness. Set yourself to work with new earnestness for your own improvement, and seek to improve yourself, not only for your own sake, but that you may more effectually improve and quicken your fellow-creatures, and God will crown your labours with success.

"What you need, what all need, is determined self-denial. You need to lay on yourself severe rules as to the distribution of time, social intercourse, &c. You need force of purpose, hardiness, and resolution. This is a much deeper evil than selfishness or coldness. You have been brought up, perhaps, too delicately, and are paying the penalty of having faced so few storms. You have not yet learned to will with that energy and fearlessness to which so many difficulties yield. Do you ask how this force is to be gained? We know that exposure, exertion, and conflict with difficulties do much to give tone to the body, and so they do to the mind. The revolving of elevating thoughts in our closet does little for us. We must bring them home to the mind in the midst of action and difficulty. I cannot, then, consent that you should yield to your first serious trial in life. Resolve on the acquisition of moral energy,—the greatest of

acquisitions, and as far as you can command circumstances, place yourself where it may be won most effectually. I would not expose you very freely at first, any more than I would carry the invalid from his warm room into a piercing atmosphere. But take on yourself some good work, and determine to carry it through, whether hard or easy, painful or pleasant, to the extent of your power. I care little where you preach, if you find a sphere which will give a more manly tone to your mind, and inure you to wrestle with difficulties. I do not fear, nor must you. God bless you!"

In relation to the trials of young ministers, he once also said,—"You must not expect too much from your minister, especially at first. If he have sensibility, he will suffer enough from the consciousness of deficiency, without being reminded of it from abroad. I cannot describe to you the load which weighed down my mind at the beginning of my ministry."

How far he was then wrapped about by chill morning fogs, which for a time, but only for a time, shut out the sunshine of God's all-embracing joy, appears also from the following description of his early experience:—

"You tell me your faith was the faith of happiness. This is never the surest. Fortunately, mine grew up under a dark sky, and the light has been increasing to this day. My passion for happiness spent itself in my youth in reverie. I never thought of realizing the vision on earth, and yet it has, in an humble manner, been realized. My faith in God, schooled by trial, looked to him first and almost exclusively for virtue, for deliverance from the great evil of sin, which I early felt to be the only true evil. The consciousness of unworthiness repressed all hopes of immediate happiness, gave me a profound conviction of the *justice* of my suffering, turned all my reproaches from Providence on myself, and not only made me incapable of murmuring, but taught me gratitude for the discipline of life. How often, in disappointment, has my first utterance been thanks to the Purifier of the soul!

"Thus my faith has never for a moment been shaken by suffering. The consciousness of unworthiness, of falling so far below my idea of duty, a feeling which hardly forsakes me, has helped much to reconcile me to outward evil. It has taken the sting from human reproach. In listening to the inward reprover, I have cared little for human opinion, and

have found too much truth in censure to be much displeased with any but myself. Accordingly, my religion has taken very much one form; I think of God as the Father, from whose power and love I may seek and hope for myself and others the unutterable and only good,—that of deliverance from all inward evil, of perfect, unspotted goodness, of spiritual life now and for ever.

"I have talked of myself, for, after all, our experience is the best lesson we can give to others. Your nature differs. You have had an impatient thirst for immediate happiness, which my early history, and perhaps my mental constitution, forbade me. Happiness has come to me almost as a surprise, without plan or anticipation. You have grasped at it as almost your lawful inheritance, and had almost a feeling of wrong at disappointment."

Thus all proves that he was at this time concentred in his own soul, and seeking there to gain the unity with God which is salvation. His private papers, especially, show how intently he was striving to subdue evil, to shun temptation, and to give freest room to pure and holy thoughts. Such memorials are sacred, and should be used as under the eye of the spirit which wrote these records of its pilgrimage, and now has outgrown and dropped its mortal shell. But it may encourage sinking hearts to know that this good man was tried as they are, and agonized his way to peace. And some few hints are therefore given from his journals. They cannot, indeed, be rightly omitted, in describing one who was so bright an instance of moral victory. These papers most abound in the first years of his ministry; though the habits then formed remained strong through life. They manifest unvarying self-scrutiny, and prove by what toil his character and mind were formed. A tone of self-depreciation runs through them,—so eager is he to detect the most subtle workings of sin, to expel it, and to guard against its return. They reveal an incessant warfare, not with great evils, but with small ones,—with the remnants of evil lurking in the outskirts of his nature. It was by elaborate analysis of his own tendencies, and unfaltering aspiration to the perfect, that he sought to mould himself to a symmetrical goodness.

The headings of these papers are various: such as "Ends," "Permanent Objects," "Promises," "Practicable Excellence," "Improvements required," "Relations," "Domestic Reforms," "System," "Subjects of Meditation," "Heart,

Character," "Rules of Life," "Directory and Review," &c. It is noticeable in them, that intellect and affections are subjected to the same rigid discipline. Their pervading trait is devoutness.

"How do I deserve to be removed from my labours,—I who labour so poorly, and with such low motives! The honour of my work I have forfeited. Let me humble myself before God, and pray for restoration to his service."

"How continually selfishness breaks forth! It must be resisted perpetually. Let nothing be spoken or done to display self; but let simple love be the spring. Do I know what such love will rise to, if cultivated?"

"Let me meditate on such subjects, and among such scenes and society, as shall humble me, raise me above human opinion, deliver me from envy, dispose me to receive reproof, and make me active."

"Never *talk* of pains, sicknesses, complaints, &c."

"Review every action after performing it; consider from what principle it proceeded, and ask forgiveness for whatever sin has mingled in it."

"Let me not waste the day in meditation on myself, but be vigorous for some end, and every evening search deeply into my heart."

"To speak on interesting subjects is the ground of sincerity."

"Let me, when in society with those who differ from me, feel the importance of sincerity and independence. Let me consider that virtue is infinitely more important than their good opinion. Let me leave to God the impression which I make, when I frankly express feelings and opinions. Let me remember, that ultimately the friendship of the good will be secured by the discharge of duty."

"In conversation, let me feel that I shall gain more by candour than by victory."

"Let me cherish frankness by thinking of the nobleness of the quality. Restraint prevents expressions of affection, makes society painful, chills the heart."

"Eternal life is holy life—the exercise of *love* to God and all beings."

"We must be babes, if we would have God revealed to us; must feel the weakness, ignorance, helplessness, dependence, wants of little children. We must become fools, and see that we know nothing. We must hunger and thirst, and

feel a void, as having nothing. Am I a babe? Do I sit low?"

"Attain a single, simple heart. Never speak to God or man without desiring the end I profess. Let me beware of formality in discharging religious duties. Let prayer, conversation, preaching, all flow from the heart. Let me first feel the force of truth myself, and then impress it upon others. Let me feel the force of every truth and every argument with which I am conversant. Let me be not learned, but *wise*."

"Let me apply to my most painful, humble duties first and most attentively."

"Let me continually engage in labours enjoined by God, and with the ends and temper he requires, and feel a *perfect confidence* in him for support. Let my whole life be a leaning upon God."

"Let me place duty on the ground of privilege, and consider every opportunity of employing time usefully a favour; and ask only, *What is duty?* in every state."

"When any particular sin occurs to my mind, let me connect it with an act of humiliation before God, so that even sin shall lead to a communion with God."

"Let me decide upon the quantity and extent of any pleasure which is right, before indulging in it, so as to avoid all painful balancing of mind. Let every meal be an exercise of self-government; eating considerately, and recalling its designed end."

"Let me live in continual preparation for prayer, in such a state of mind that I may immediately engage in it."

"Let one hour after dinner each day be given to intercession, to meditating upon and devising good, and as much of the afternoon as is necessary to accomplishing it."

"In conversation, let me draw persons from evil speaking and contention, and painful or injurious subjects, by catching some thought suggested, and making it the ground of remark."

"Let me strive to connect every personal enjoyment with acts of kindness to my neighbour. Whenever I enjoy, let me ask, How can I impart and diffuse this happiness? and let me make every pleasure a bond of friendship, a ground of communion, and esteem it chiefly on this account. When I suffer, let me ask, How can I relieve similar suffering, wherever it exists? and so quicken sympathy and improve experience."

"When I have any portion of time not devoted to any particular purpose, let me ask, Can I not spend it with God? Let me seize it as a peculiarly privileged season."

"When I suffer any pain, loss, &c., let me first ask, not, How shall I remove, but, How shall I improve it? Let me be willing to suffer for this end."

"Religious exercises are God's armour to defend us, the means of grace, support, and glory. Hence union with Christ is a ground of fruitfulness. Christ is all-important to us as a substantial, steady exhibition of virtue, not fleeting or unsubstantial."

"Have access to God, as if introduced to his presence. Seek God; seek the sight of him; *observe him in all things.*"

"Let me every day give away something, and daily deny myself something, that I may have more to give."

"Be very careful to open and close the day with devotion. Pray before going to meals, or entering society, or engaging in study and composition. On Sunday, let me preach over to myself the sermon and pray for its success, before I go to the desk; read works of sober devotion till the exercises of the day are over; after service, consider how far I have been faithful and conducted as a minister should; after supper, retire to examine, humble, and devote myself; and until bed-time, reflect upon the character and love of the Redeemer."

"What objects interest me most? Is my mind in such a state, that a certain change of circumstances would leave me desolate, leave my mind craving and empty, leave me nothing to live for, cast a gloom on all prospects? What is it round which my affections cleave?"

"Have my thoughts this day been governed, my attention concentrated? What have I learned? What has constituted my chief pleasure? Have I been humble? Have I had peace? Have I acted from love? Whom have I made happy? Have I been sincere? Have I been in conversation modest and ingenuous, patient, attentive? What temptations have I encountered and opposed? What pleasant objects have allured? what pains terrified? Have I enjoyed the light of God's countenance? Whence has this day taken its character?"

"I wish to gain a *calm energy*, a strong principle of love and independence."

"I wish to gain *clearness of conception*, a distinct and

simple mode of considering objects. I should be careful at first to separate from a subject every thing foreign to it, and place it in as clear a light as possible."

"Amidst the multitude of objects perceived and remembered, there must be selection. Great objects make great minds. Hence God, eternity, heaven, the kingdom of Christ, the perfection of the world, our highest good,—these should be our *objects*."

"To perceive the *true end* of existence, and the *means* to that end, is to improve the mind. We have a complex end, yet a harmonious one. The glory and kingdom of God, the holiness and happiness of mankind, our own eternal good,—these conspire."

"A wise man seeks to shine in himself; a fool to outshine others. The former is humbled by a sense of his infirmities; the latter is lifted up by the discovery of the faults of others. The wise man considers what he wants; the fool what he abounds in. The wise man is happy in his own approbation; the fool, in the applause of his fellows."

"I ought to place myself in situations where there will be the greatest stimulus to active thought and good exertion,—where I shall find no comfort without these,—where I shall be called to think and act *impartially*,—where every natural principle and relation will impel me in the right way. Let me place myself under obligation to live usefully. Let this be the habitual question,—How can I now in such a scene imitate Christ, breathe his spirit?"

"Do I read without prejudice,—without wishing any system or doctrine to be true,—without desiring to find any false,—with a willingness to receive as true, and to obey, whatever is taught in Scripture, with a sense of the *infinite importance* of the truth,—with a readiness to sacrifice any pursuit, wish, gratification, which militates with it?"

"Should I not propose an end when I write? and are there not certain rules which will apply to the understanding, and by conforming to which the most important thoughts and illustrations will be suggested? What is meant by a flow of thought? what precedes, what causes it? In writing, should not one topic be always kept in view? Attention must be concentrated. Thus invention will be aided. Thus all connected ideas will start forth; and the whole subject will be viewed in an extensive light."

"Will not thoughts take a direction from the end, temper,

and disposition? Are not thoughts *voluntary?* do they not originate in *active* principles? All my thoughts, however unobserved, have relations expressive of my character. Let me perpetually examine whether subjects of thought are not so related to myself as to flatter or excite some selfish passion. Let me not be an egotist in thought."

"Is not every thought which continues in the mind, in fact, *chosen?* Is not the heart exercised about it? Am *I* not voluntary in cherishing it? Our *objects* of thought should be chosen with a view to sanctity of heart, to conformation of our nature to God and heaven. There should be some rule or law by which to judge our thoughts. One general rule is,—Are my thoughts *pleasing to God?* another is,—Are they *useful?*"

"I should constantly have some *end* in view, in thinking. My thoughts should be arranged; there should be some directing principle for them. A passive mind rests in the perception of an object. The active mind inquires for its use, cause, consequences, relations, signification, past state, tendency, changes, &c. Everything has innumerable connexions and dependencies. These are the objects of thought. In connecting with a thing *all that belongs to it*, we become *acquainted with it.* This thorough acquaintance with all objects of perception is what we should propose."

"We should desire to have every idea connected in our minds, as its object is in nature, so that a clear view of it shall arise before us. *Distinct conception* is important. Wide views of beings and events should be desired. We should seek to see all things in their just extent, clearly, forcibly. All thoughts which they suggest should *be connected in their natural order, be grasped at once, so as to form a complete view.*"

"Everything may be viewed as a sign of God's will and character; and our thoughts, after tracing an object, should at length ascend to this all-important end.—Should I be sluggish in such a world as this?"

"The perfection of mind is to have a propensity to seek agreeable and interesting objects, to have attention turn spontaneously to beauties of nature, excellences of human character, God's perfections. A mind thus filled is always improving, always happy. A mind which turns to disagreeable things, party agitations, future uncertainties, &c.,

must be depraved. All objects may be viewed as expressions of goodness."

"How to keep the mind open to every source of enjoyment, to the *little pleasures* which surround us? There is a possibility of labouring too hard for this. We generally get so far absorbed in some care, as to become insensible to the *variety* of pleasing objects. Is there not an easy, disengaged state of mind very favourable to a succession of minute enjoyments? There is sometimes an exhilaration of mind which throws a glory over every object, and seems to give new sensibility to every taste."

"He is miserable who makes pleasure his business. God designs us for activity, pursuit of ends,—efficiency. Action originating in God, and attended with the consciousness of his favour, is the highest source of enjoyment. Every pleasure should be an expression of God's pleasure, and should bind us to those around us. Does not this state of mind invite pleasures of every description? Does it not open our eyes to all varieties of good?"

"Is it not possible to allow no unpleasant objects to dwell upon our minds any longer than we can derive benefit from them? May we not bring our sensibilities to pain very much under our own control, and use them only for discipline? How should every opportunity be seized for *invigorating* our minds and active powers, perseverance, firmness, fortitude, application, so that energetic, successful, unwearied labour may be the result!"

His inward state is with like simplicity made manifest in papers of a devotional character, written apparently in part for his own private use, in part as preparative for the family altar and the pulpit. The tone of his piety, pervading as it did all thought and action, may be best understood from a few extracts.

"O God! the Centre of all pure spirits, the Everlasting Goodness, we come to thee. Thou art the happiness of heaven; and thy presence, felt by the soul that communes with thee, is the highest good. Ignorant of thee, we know nothing aright; wandering from thee, we lose all light and peace; forgetting thee, we turn our minds from the noblest object of thought; and without love to thee, we are separated from infinite loveliness, and from the only sub-

stantial and sufficient source of joy. Thou hast an inexhaustible fulness of life; and thine unceasing communications take nothing from thy power to bless. Thou art infinitely better than all thy gifts, and through all we desire to rise to thee."

"We thank thee for the proofs thou givest of thy essential, pure, and perfect benignity, so that through all clouds and darkness we can see a gracious Father. In this world of shadows, this fleeting tide of things, this life of dreams, we rejoice that there is a Reality, sure, unchanging, in which we may find rest; that there is a Power which can cleanse us from all sin, raise us to all virtue and happiness, and give us endless growth. How great is our privilege, that we have such an object for our hope and trust,—that our souls may contemplate infinite loveliness, greatness, goodness,—that we may at all times commune with the Best of Beings!"

"For thy inviolable faithfulness, thy impartial justice, thy unerring wisdom, thy unfathomable counsels, thy unwearied care, thy tender mercy, thy resistless power, we adore thee. For the splendour spread over all thy works, and still more for the higher beauty of the soul, of which the brightness of creation is but the emblem and faint shadow, we thank thee. O, let thy love affect our hearts, let us feel its reality, constancy, tenderness! To thee we owe all. Thine is the health of our bodies, the light of our minds, the warmth of affection, the guiding voice of conscience. Whatever knowledge of virtuous impressions we have derived from the society of friends, the conversation of the wise and good, the care of instructors, the researches of past ages, we desire to trace gratefully to thee. We rejoice that we depend on thee, the Father of Spirits, whose requisitions are so reasonable, whose government is so mild, whose influences are so ennobling. How unspeakably great is thy goodness! And all our other blessings are as nothing, when compared with the sublime, pure, infinite glory, to which we are called by the gospel of thy Son."

"We are infinitely honoured in being under thy protection, and having all our affairs overruled by thy providence. We thank thee for every good influence imparted to our minds, for every holy aspiration, every motive of conscience; for the countless materials of happiness, and our power over nature; for the light which thou hast thrown

upon the darkness of life's trials; for the success with which thou hast crowned the labours of reflecting men in exploring thy works; for the blessings of civilization and knowledge; for our capacities of improvement; for our domestic relations, and for their influence in softening and improving our nature; for all the wisdom, purity, love, communicated to the human race; for the illustrious examples thou hast raised up, in successive ages, of enlightened piety and disinterested virtue; for the influence which eminent men have exerted, for the splendour they have shed on human nature, for the encouragement of their example in the pursuit of excellence; and above all, for our redemption by Jesus Christ, the privilege of access to thee, the hope of pardon, the influences of thy spirit, the prospect of immortality."

"We thank thee, that thou hast set us in families, in neighbourhoods, in communities; that thou hast made of one blood all men, thus uniting us in and by a common nature to the whole human race, and giving us means, motives, and opportunities to exercise a continually extending love. We thank thee for Jesus Christ; that he came, not to bless one people or one age, but all nations and times; that he came to establish such a religion, to seal such a covenant; that he came to be a bright manifestation of God, to give everlasting happiness. For a Saviour so excellent, so suited to our wants, so fitted to awaken our love, to inspire holy and delightful attachment, to call out our whole hearts, we thank thee. We bless thee that man's sins have served to manifest and glorify thy mercy, to show forth thine essential, inexhaustible goodness, so that our unworthiness has formed a new ground for love and thankfulness to thee."

"May Christ be precious to us; teach us his worth, his glory, so that we may love him and rejoice in him with joy unspeakable. May a sense of the greatness of the evils from which he came to deliver, and of the blessings which he can bestow, excite our sensibility, gratitude, desire, and lead our minds to dwell on him. Let sin be our greatest burden; may all life's ills seem light in comparison with it; may we groan for deliverance from it, and be more earnest in resisting it than in resisting all other evils; and may we welcome Christ as our saviour from it."

"Communicate and quicken spiritual life. May our souls be warm with life. Save us from an inanimate and sluggish

state. Teach us thy purity, how great thy abhorrence of evil, how irreconcileable thy hatred of it, and may we all partake of the same abhorrence of sin. Increase our sensibility to evil; may we shun every appearance of it and repel the first temptation; and in a world where example is so corrupt, we beseech thee to arm us with a holy fortitude."

"Inspire us with a generous love of virtue, of rectitude, of holiness. May we prefer it even to life. Animate us to adhere to good in every danger. May nothing on earth move us or shake our steadfastness. Increase our sensibility to good; may we see more and more its loveliness and beauty."

"Animate us to cheerfulness. May we have a joyful sense of our blessings, learn to look on the bright circumstances of our lot, and maintain a perpetual contentedness under thy allotments. Fortify our minds against disappointment and calamity. Preserve us from despondency, from yielding to dejection. Teach us that no evil is intolerable but a guilty conscience, and that nothing can hurt us, if with true loyalty of affection we keep thy commandments and take refuge in thee."

"May every day add brightness and energy to our conceptions of thy lovely and glorious character. Give us a deeper sense of thy presence, and instruct us to nourish our devoutness by every scene of nature and every event of providence. Assist us to consecrate our whole being and existence to thee, our understandings to the knowledge of thy character, our hearts to the veneration and love of thy perfections, our wills to the choice of thy commands, our active energies to the accomplishment of thy purposes, our lives to thy glory, and every power to the imitation of thy goodness. Be thou the centre, life, and sovereign of our souls."

Thus earnestly was Mr. Channing seeking perfect peace and unclouded light. He believed, and acted on the faith, that only the purity of heart which is blessed by seeing God can fit a man to be the spiritual teacher of his fellows; and as the condition for usefulness, he opened his inmost will to receive the Divine life of love. It certainly is not surprising that a nature so sensitive and tender, especially when compelled to undue action by ill health, should have manifested

its struggles in a somewhat austere gravity of manner. But water gains crystal clearness by percolating the sands; and the very severity of his self-discipline gave sweetness more and more to his social intercourse.

For the first few months after his settlement, Mr. Channing lived, as we have seen, with some parishioners and friends. But even their devoted kindness could not fill the void in his affections; and in a letter to his sister Ann, to whom he was most fondly attached, we find him writing,—"I am sad; my sister, come and cheer me." It was soon in his power, however, to gratify this desire for domestic love by removing his mother and the family to Boston. His brother Francis and he had long since agreed, that, for the end of insuring their ability to aid their mother and her other children, one of them should remain unmarried for at least ten years; and as his salary was a more certain income than his brother's professional gains, who, though rapidly rising to distinction as a lawyer, was not yet established in lucrative business, he now took it upon himself to fulfil the arrangement. So he wrote to his mother that he had a parsonage which he could not occupy, and fuel which he could not burn; and that she would save him much waste and trouble by turning them to good use. He well knew that she could not afford to leave her house and large garden at Newport, without such an addition to her means as he thus placed at her disposal; but he chose to represent himself as the person obliged, by pleading his need of her guardianship. She yielded to his affectionate appeal, and in a short time he had the satisfaction of seeing the home circle gathered round him, beneath his own roof, blessed by his bounty, and enjoying the best opportunities for happiness and improvement.

The tact with which he sought to conceal—even from himself, if it might be—his kindness, proved its temper. His father had left so small a property, that it was quite inadequate to the support and education of the growing family; and by surrendering for their use the greater part of his salary, William changed their condition from that of want to one of competence. But while thus supplying them with the means of comfort and culture, his words and acts rather tended to give the impression that they were nowise dependent upon him, but only on the family estate. Without, of course, employing deception, he yet was sedulous to keep from the partakers of his benefits the knowledge that he was their bene-

factor. "I was often amused, and still oftener filled with veneration," writes a brother, "by the mode in which he talked of the necessity of punctually paying his board to our mother, and placed his funds in her hands, as he said, for safe keeping, withdrawing only such trifling sums as he absolutely needed." All extra fees were given, as their rightful perquisite, to his sisters; and as years passed on, and the wants and desires of the various members of the family unfolded, each day but gave new proofs of his ever thoughtful, ever delicate affection. His outlays for them, in addition to his large charities abroad, were so considerable, that, though his salary was for those times ample, being at first twelve hundred, and afterwards fifteen hundred dollars, he never laid up a cent, and was often wholly destitute. "Well do I remember," said one of his near relatives, "how pained he was at the time of my marriage, when he wished to make me a wedding present, and had but fifty dollars to give. He could not help then telling me how poor he was." Thus, for ten years and more, did he faithfully redeem the first words spoken to his mother after his ordination, when she said,—"Now, William, I must give you up!" "O, no!" he replied, "you shall never find that the duties of the Christian minister are inconsistent with those of the son."

A slight sketch of his constant little sacrifices in the petty details of life may most clearly show how he appeared to those who lived with him in the nearest relations, and who knew him best. He had always been strict in his habits of self-denial, in food, dress, and every mode of expenditure; but he was now more simple than ever, and seemed to have become incapable of any form of self-indulgence. He took the smallest room in the house for his study, though he might easily have commanded one more light, airy, and in every way more suitable; and chose for his sleeping-chamber an attic, which he shared with a younger brother. The furniture of the latter might have answered for the cell of an anchorite, and consisted of a hard mattress on a cot-bedstead, plain wooden chairs and table, with matting on the floor. It was without fire, and to cold he was through life extremely sensitive; but he never complained, or appeared in any way to be conscious of inconvenience. "I recollect," says his brother, "after one most severe night, that in the morning he sportively thus alluded to his suffering:—'If my bed were my country, I should be somewhat like Bonaparte; I have

no control except over the part that I occupy; the instant I move, frost takes possession.'" In sickness only would he change for the time his apartment, and accept a few comforts. The dress, too, that he habitually adopted, was of most inferior quality; and garments were constantly worn which the world would call mean, though an almost feminine neatness preserved him from the least appearance of personal neglect. The only luxury he would indulge himself in was annually to lay out a small sum in increasing his scanty library. "Never did I know him to be guilty of a selfish act," testifies his brother; "and he shrank from any mention of his incessant kindness, as if the least allusion to it gave him pain." These few mementoes are, indeed, quite unpretending; but their very humbleness may serve to show how vital was the root of love from which such ever fresh disinterestedness bloomed forth.

A few further extracts from his journals will exhibit how his social affections were trained to an unreserved loyalty to conscience.

"Let me pay peculiar attention to family prayer, to make Scripture interesting and prayer solemn. Let me pray for them in secret daily. Let me attend to their reading, improve their minds. Let me attend to the religion of the domestics, and give them equal privileges with the rest on the Sabbath and in the family exercises. Let me regard the wants of all, and live sacrificing my own will and desires to theirs, abounding in affectionate services, and remembering them always as those whom God has pointed out to me as my peculiar objects.

"Let me endeavour to interest all in good pursuits, continually propose kind ends, make active benevolence their spring, and excite them to a course of pious, loving life.

"Let me in conversation avoid finding fault, satire, severity; let me express the spirit and power, rather than the speculations, of divinity; let me communicate liberally whatever knowledge I acquire, and raise our social intercourse.

"Let me encourage and share innocent pleasures, contribute all in my power to their happiness, make them feel my affection, and convince them that love, not bigoted severity, leads to my cautious and solemn admonition.

"Let me cultivate harmony and mutual affection, strive to make home interesting from peace and love and mutual interest and regard.

"Encourage private prayer morning and evening among them.

"Let me introduce pleasing and impressive works on religion, which will lead to conversation, inquiry, &c.

"Let me introduce society, entertaining, instructive, and tending to moral and religious improvement.

"Let me observe what in other families tends to happiness, and improvement, and religion.

"Let me promote unity of sentiment, especially on religious and most interesting subjects.

"Let me live with them as immortal beings, and have in view the end of present existence.

"In the morning, when I see any of my friends after the night's separation, let me receive them as new gifts from God, as raised from the dead.

"My mother has been quite sick. I have never seen her so much reduced. For a day or two my fears were not a little excited. I felt more sensibly than I ever did before, that this nearest, best, of earthly friends was mortal. Thanks to a merciful Providence, she is regaining her strength. It is a pleasing consideration, that her children have been able to repay a little of her kindness; but how little can parental kindness be requited!"

That his sense of duty was at this time even tyrannical, Mr. Channing recognised in later life, and regretted that this stern nurse had cramped the action of his native impulses by too close swathing; but he had not then learned that the true art of moral culture is to balance extravagant tendencies by quickening those which are languid, and that growth is a safer means of harmony in character than repression. He painfully felt, too, that his solemnity repelled those whom he longed to win, and cast a shade over the circle he would have rejoiced to brighten. And, indeed, had it not been for his greatness of heart, dignity, assiduous affection, and evidently lofty aims, his constant staidness of deportment would have been irksome. For the other members of the family presented in manners an amusing contrast to this beloved friend, whom, highly as they honoured him, it was not in their will to imitate. The mother, as we have seen, had inherited from her father a vivacious temper, keen perceptions, a wit as sharp as it was droll, and a sincerity of thought and speech, which made light of conventionalities, and swept away respectable pretences like cobwebs. Her sallies, given out in

the plainest Anglo-Saxon, sometimes sounded strangely as a response to her son's guarded words, especially when the characters of others, or passing events, were under discussion. And the hilarity of the younger brothers and sisters would have jarred in discord with his taciturn ways, had not his considerateness been so genuine. Self-possessed in the midst of them, however, he allayed all differences, and melted them into one. He devoted himself also to the culture of his sisters, read and conversed with them at certain portions of the day, was watchful over their manners, and as they came forward in life schooled himself to leave behind the student's gown, and accompanied them into the delightful circles which the influence of his talents opened to the members of his household. In the friendly groups, too, which his mother's hospitable and genial temper gathered round her fireside, he endeavoured to act his part. But it was plain that he was not at home in festive scenes of any kind. His conversation was at all times and in all places connected, grave, and on themes of high interest. He could not unbend. And intent as he was on subjects which absorbed his whole spiritual energy, he actually had neither inclination nor even the sense of liberty to relax. In a word, he was striving for ever to press onward and upward; and chiefly longed to bear those whom he loved with him in his ascent.

But though thus serious, he was most loving. His gentleness of character showed itself in all social relations. If controversies and warm debates arose, he had the skill to smooth the storm by soft words and calm looks. If scandal was introduced, he changed the topic; and if any one's reputation was attacked, he would say, with quiet firmness,—"Pray, stop! for if you continue these remarks, I shall feel bound to repeat every word to the person of whom you are speaking." The effect was to stifle all desire of crimination. The same disposition appeared in his liberality towards those who differed in religious opinions. "William is no Quaker, you see," said his mother one day to a friend, with whom he was pleasantly talking upon their opposite views. "No," answered he; "and E—— did not expect to find me one; but there is a common ground of Christian feeling, where, without distinction of name, we can unite in belief, that the sincere worshippers of God are the accepted of God."

As another illustration, this little incident may be mentioned. Busy in studies, in visits among his parish, and in

charitable movements, or calls on the sick and needy, the week passed away, and left him on Saturday usually unprepared. A coloured teacher, who was occupied in his school duties on other days, but who was anxious to improve himself by Mr. Channing's society, took occasion on the leisure afternoon to visit him, and frequently prolonged his stay into the evening. The mother was greatly annoyed at seeing her son's last precious hours thus broken in upon. But though it obliged him oftentimes to sit up late in the night, and to finish his sermons while the morning bell was ringing, he would never allow his coloured friend to be denied.

Generosity pervaded his conduct. To the erring he was consistently forbearing. Two instances may show this trait. A domestic, in whom the family placed confidence, professed "to be converted to religion," at some revival in the society to which she belonged, and was very strict in her devotions and attendance at meeting. The members of the family soon detected her, however, in the commission of indiscriminate petty thefts. When accused, she was highly indignant at being suspected: but as the property was found in her possession, her hypocrisy was clear. Mr. Channing did nothing in relation to the affair but to converse with her, giving her the most earnest counsel in his power, and then allowed her to depart. He expressed for her only the deepest pity; mentioning as his reason, that "she had been brought up in an almshouse, and had received no good influences in early life." The amount taken was quite large; but he considered it wrong to inflict a legal penalty upon one whom society had so neglected; and, if he had followed his own inclination, would have kept her in his service, and have sought to reclaim her. On another occasion, though at a somewhat later period of life, he rented a place in the country for the summer, with the obligation on his part of keeping it in order. The gardener whom he hired, however, proved faithless; sold the valuable vegetables and fruits, and injured the grounds and trees by his carelessness, leaving the loss to fall on his employer. The man became sick, and for the end of encouraging him to reform, Mr. Channing paid him his full wages, and, after exposing to him the baseness of his conduct, gave him his best advice, and pardoned the offence.

The distaste for social enjoyments, which has been noticed, doubtless was increased by Mr. Channing's poor state of health; for lassitude followed all exertion, and physical de-

pression cast a chill upon a naturally glowing temper. And for the end of enabling all to discriminate between the essential man and the accidents of his organization, it seems necessary to set this fact of his chronic debility in a distinct light. In our present ignorance of the relations of body to spirit, indeed, we can never decide how far morbid action in either is a cause or an effect; but their mutual dependence is plain enough. It needs only to be said, then, that from the time of his residence at Richmond till his death, he never knew a day of unimpaired vigour. The common services of the pulpit prostrated him; unusual efforts brought fever, alternating with dulness; earnest conversation cost sleepless nights; exercise, except of the most moderate kind, was rather exhausting than refreshing; he yearly lost weeks and months by inability to study or write; and to one who knew him, it only seemed surprising that he could accomplish so much. Had he but retained the buoyancy of early years, he might, by scholarship and by public and social labours, have shed abroad a light, beside which his actual success would be dim. On the other hand, indeed, it may be asked, whether his river of life did not gain depth from the narrow channel through which it was forced to roll? Fortitude, purity, concentration, may have in some degree compensated him for lack of strength. But to one who believes that God has for ever established a harmony between the spiritual and natural worlds, it must in all cases appear probable that the teachings of health will be more large, sound, varied, rich, than those of sickness. Yet he struggled bravely with his fate. He knew that his own imprudence had done much to cause his infirmity, and humbly accepted the limits which it imposed, while he steadily sought to retain and keep the largest measure of power. "The very scrupulous care that he took of himself," writes a sister, "was a sacrifice to duty. Most beautiful, too, was his thoughtfulness to avoid being a burden upon others. His patience was unvarying. I can recal one instance of a feverish attack during the heat of summer. We had been fanning him during the day, and he had seemed as tranquil as a sleeping infant; but to our great surprise, when the physician came in towards evening, he entreated him to give him something to allay the restlessness, which was almost beyond his bearing or power of control. But when was he otherwise than gentle?" Thus his very weaknesses formed a new bond of affectionate respect. He saw

with pity the habits of effeminacy and self-indulgence which constant regard to one's own state too often breeds in the invalid, and systematically guarded against such temptations. With the pride of an energetic character, too, he felt the shame of seeming to be a valetudinarian. But the keenest pain he suffered was, from being forced to halt when he would have hastened, and to leave untried many a promising plan of self-culture and of usefulness. This was the true cross to a spirit so earnest in hope, comprehensive in sympathy, conscientious, and brave; and nothing could have been more manly than the uncomplaining serenity with which he bore it.

Mr. Channing chiefly lamented his want of strength because he was thereby hampered in his private studies, and in schemes of professional activity. He did what he could, and too often much more than he ought, but fell far short of his ideal, and saw all round him fields white for the harvest, when his arm was too feeble to put in the sickle and reap. Yet, from his first appearance in the pulpit, he made a sensation such as had been long unknown in Boston, distinguished as many of her ministers justly were. The highest among them, Dr. Kirkland, said truly of him, and of Buckminster, who came forward two years later, that they had introduced "a new era in preaching." Their congregations were thronged; and when either of them was to take his turn at the Thursday lecture in Chauncy-place, the usually thin audience at that antiquated service became a crowd.

Immediately after Mr. Channing's settlement, the small society in Federal-street was much enlarged by the numbers drawn around the young, devoted, eloquent pastor; and from that time forward steadily grew, until, in 1809, the old church was taken down, and the corner-stone laid of the large building which now occupies its place. The devoutly disposed in the community looked to him with the hope that he might be a means of fanning once more to flame the smouldering ashes on the altars of piety. The seriousness of his deportment, the depth and sweetness of his voice, the pathos with which he read the Scriptures and sacred poetry, the solemnity of his appeals, his rapt and kindling enthusiasm, his humble, trustful spirit of prayer, his subdued feeling, so expressive of personal experience, made religion a new reality; while his whole air and look of spirituality won them to listen by its mild and somewhat melancholy beauty. The most trifling

saw in him a man thoroughly in earnest, who spoke not of dreams and fictions, but of facts with which he was intimately conversant; and the serious gladly welcomed one who led the way, and beckoned them nearer to the holy of holies which they aspired to enter. Intellectual people, too, were attracted by the power and grace of his pulpit addresses. He opened to them a large range of thought, presented clear, connected, and complete views of various topics, roused their faculties of discernment by nice discriminations and exact statements, and gratified their taste by the finished simplicity of his style. But the novelty, perhaps, that chiefly stirred his audiences, was the directness with which he even then brought his Christian principles to bear upon actual life. With no flights of mystic exaltation, forgetful in raptures of the earth, with no abstract systems of metaphysical theology, with no coldly elegant moral essays, did he occupy the minds of his hearers, but with near and sublime objects made evident by faith, with lucid truths approved alike by Scripture and by conscience, and with duties pressed urgently home upon all as rules for daily practice. He saw, and made others see, that life was no play-place, but a magnificent scene for glorifying God, and a rich school for the education of spirits. He showed to men the substance, of which surrounding appearances are the shadow; and behind transient experiences revealed the spiritual laws which they express. Thus he gathered round him an enlarging circle of devoted friends, who gratefully felt that they drank in from him new life. The old members of the Society, too, for the most part simple people of plain manners, took the heartiest delight in his services, while feeling just pride in his talents. And the few distinguished persons of the congregation knew well how to appreciate his rare gifts, and to extend his fame. Thus was he in every way favourably situated to call out his highest powers; and his journals show how ardently he strove to fulfil the hopes which he knew were cherished for his usefulness.

"My great end is the promotion of the moral and religious interests of mankind, the cause of virtue, the gospel. This is my occupation. This end may be accomplished everywhere. Let me make this study the *great end* of life. Let me study for this. Let my exercise, relaxation, visits, prayers, all have this in view. Let me eat and sleep for this. Let me never lose sight of my flock, constantly oversee them, never

leave them. Let me strive to make them fruitful to God, direct and excite exertion for good, exhibit an example of the life of God."

"Weekly lectures are highly important. What an influence in the commonwealth would a general attention to religion in the capital exert! May not the present increased interest be a sprinkling before the shower?"

"Meetings to pray for the spirit. Let me when among Christians, when visiting them, pray with them, that men may be awakened to religious attention, and desire that God be glorified, Christ obeyed, heaven sought."

"Religious *union*. How to make them feel a desire of assisting, quickening each other in a religious course. Visit the church often in a religious manner. Pray in private and in public for this union. Make this the subject of conversation. Meetings of the church; and in order to make them useful, let me labour to become an extemporaneous preacher. The church should feel that on their prayers and zeal the salvation of others depends. Let me *now* strive to quicken my church, while attention is awakened to religion."

"The influence of the church I need. I can do little myself. I want the brethren to be able to converse, the sisters at home to be able to instil into the minds of their children religious truth. I should lend suitable books, exalt their intellectual powers, direct their habitual thoughts.

"Have I not reason to fear that many are destitute of love to God, to Christ, to the church, to man? Do they not confide in a course of negative goodness? Are they not full of false hopes from the performance of particular duties, abstinence from great crimes? Are they not easy and satisfied because they give no positive evidence of irreligion, not because they have positive evidence of religion? Do they not mistake habit for principle? Do the hopes, pleasures, duties, difficulties of religion form any part of domestic conversation? Is holiness an end? Is God all in all? Is Christ all in all to them? Is love the habit of their soul, operating in their whole conduct?"

"Christ came to recover men from sin. A change of heart is the object of the gospel. In this consists the redemption of Christ. It becomes men to weep, to feel true, hearty sorrow at sin itself, to abhor and condemn themselves as without excuse, to feel themselves dependent upon free, unmerited, unobligated, sovereign grace for pardon and re-

newal. Repentance includes unconditional submission, choice and desire that God should reign, should accomplish his will, should dispose of his creatures as seems to him best. It supposes subjection of ourselves and others wholly to his will. It gives all things in all times and all places to him as his own for ever."

"The spirit of God is the blessing of the new covenant. The knowledge, love, imitation, service, and enjoyment of God through eternity are all included in this gift. There can be no other rational, eternal blessedness. The spirit of God operates on the heart, creates new exercises, and dwells in the soul of Christians by constantly and immediately supporting all good affections. Every man must be new-born, have a new heart, a new principle, end, motive, disposition, a change by the spirit into a meek, submissive, self-renouncing, self-abhorring, benevolent state of soul, before he can believe, approve, choose the gospel, and receive the kingdom of heaven."

"I must make the knowledge of divine truth my end, and therefore labour to preserve a mind fitted to discover, and a heart ready to receive, instruction. The disposal of time, food, &c., should all be directed to this object; and every truth I receive I should labour immediately to impress on my own heart and on others."

"Let me unite with the most serious statedly in prayer, for the *revival of religion* in the society. Let the promotion of religion be the sole end of all exertions; let nothing else be named. Oh, the happiness of a religious society!"

"I ought to bear my people on my heart; feel the worth of their souls, that they have the capacity to serve, enjoy, glorify God for ever; feel continual heaviness and sorrow for their neglect of God; be fervent, unceasing in prayer; make their spiritual prosperity my joy; indulge in no pleasure, engage in no pursuit, which may not subserve this end; let every worldly interest which will drive them from my mind be resigned; let my highest anxiety, fear, hope, desire, affection, be exercised toward them, that God may have a people among them. Let me be the servant of the least among them for this purpose."

"Let me never talk of my zeal for souls, *except with God;* let me avoid all egotism, and carefully abstain from mention of personal experience on this subject; let me never condemn other ministers as cold; let me work where my work will not

be known, among the poor, ignorant, &c. Let me lead the serious from dependence on me, from high thoughts of my society, to Christ. Let me labour most where I shall experience least approbation, and attend chiefly to the insensible and sluggish. Let me do much in secret, pray, struggle, and purify myself for my people; let none know."

"I am sensible of a want of tenderness in my preaching. I want to preach striking, rather than melting, sermons. Let me seek that my heart be soft."

"God alone can soften my people; let me labour, therefore, chiefly in prayer. There is great disregard to prayer among us. In public worship preaching is exalted above prayer. Let me strive to make this part of the service more interesting."

"Let me separate a portion of time for considering the nature and importance of my office, and for exciting a holy, devout zeal, a fervent, sincere desire for the holiness and happiness of my people."

"Let my visits be ministerial, serious; let me speak plainly on religion, attend to the character of individuals, observe their wants. What a waste of time to make other visits! If I should see a man of business give up two hours a day to making mere calls, I should think him an idler. How am I better? Whence my timidity on the subject of religion? I do not carry conversation far enough to be serious, earnest, and hence seize no end with sufficient force."

"Let me give courses of lectures upon various subjects, adapted to different ages and conditions; a course to parents and heads of families; to the church; on church history, with applications of prophecy; on the evidences, for the young; weekly exhortations to children; a course on the duties of the young; on Jewish history and antiquities; on the testimony of nature to God; a course of expositions; a series on the parables; &c."

"My preaching does not seem to be followed with a devout, grateful, submissive, holy spirit in my church. I do not witness fervour and happiness from the prospect and hope of heaven. Their religious conversation limited to a few topics, heartless, cold, uninteresting! Whence is this? I feel increasing doubts about my success. However, we are commanded not to faint. I say to myself, One soul saved; and I feel that such an object deserves all exertion."

"The children are members of the church of Christ;

carnest, affectionate attention is due to them. I must catechize them, pray with them, teach them to pray; suggest subjects which they can illustrate; give them texts to remember; instruct them in the duties peculiar to their age, and in the doctrines suited to them."

These resolves were carried into deeds; and he was at this period an indefatigable pastor. He visited constantly, had periodical prayer-meetings, and meetings for conversation and religious instruction,—varying them as seemed best fitted to keep interest alive,—and, indeed, practised most of the modes which, though rare then, have now become common, for quickening religious sensibility and producing Christian union. To the sick he was a faithful friend, and entered into their anxieties and hopes with a touching devoutness, that lifted up their spirits as on angel wings in prayer. Into the chamber of death he came with the auroral light of the resurrection upon his brow. And to the mourner he showed the manna of consolation for ever dropping on the desert. Yet sometimes his quick sensibility subdued him. When one of his oldest and most dear parishioners, Mr. Thomas Davis, was dying, he left the weeping group around the bedside, and coming to the church amidst the then small band of his parishioners, so intimate with each other that they seemed like one family, he endeavoured to commend the departing soul to the Heavenly Father. But his voice died in the utterance; he sank his head on the desk, and burst into tears. A sob ran through the congregation, and then there was stillness. On one other occasion, when visiting a family lately bereaved, he sat down with the circle of mourners, and after remaining for a long time in silence, as if overcome with the fulness of his feelings, he uttered a groan, rose, and left the room. But these were exceptions. He usually had perfect self-control, and wore an air of serene cheerfulness, that spread a contagious calmness over troubled hearts.

In the children of the society he felt the deepest interest. He liked to gather them after service around the pulpit; when, coming down, he would converse with them, and give them familiar lessons. This was before the custom of Sunday schools was introduced. Later in his ministry, he and his friend Thacher prepared their well-known catechism. But at first he confined himself chiefly to oral instruction. He is remembered as having been very successful in making these addresses simple and attractive, clothing beautiful

thoughts in intelligible language, and addressing them to his young friends with a benignant smile, that won their confidence and opened their hearts. He once pleasantly remarked, that the most satisfactory compliment he had ever received was from a little girl, who told her mother,—"I understood every word he said." His respect for children was, indeed, singularly strong; and *respect* is the only word that can fitly express the trust he felt and manifested in their purity. He had, from the first, a profound love for their native honour, their quick moral intuitions, their truth and innocence. And once, when looking at the corpse of a beautiful child, he said, —"I consider those so early taken as mysteriously privileged."

While thus devoted to his own congregation, and made every year more and more an object of interest to the community at large by the good influences which were seen to flow from his pulpit, Mr. Channing became widely known also by the useful custom of exchanges, so universal in New England. In making these he limited himself to no denomination, but freely held intercourse with all who were seeking divine light and life. So indiscriminate, indeed, was he in this respect, that it was found difficult for many years to assign him a place in any of the sects, which the increasing temper of exclusiveness was gradually forming. Alternately he was claimed and disowned by all, being himself, as we shall hereafter see, chiefly anxious to shun controversy, and to keep the transparent heaven of religion unobscured by the clouds of theological disputes. Still, it was chiefly in Boston, and among the liberal divines of that capital, that his exchanges were necessarily made: and in their societies he was at all times a favourite preacher, though not a few complained of his gloom, and very many preferred the sententious wisdom, quaintness, sagacity, and rich variety of Kirkland, and the chaste earnestness, the scholarly fulness of allusion, the elegance of style, and eloquent oratory of Buckminster. Such hearers often carried doubtless to the religious assembly their delightful associations with the superior conversational gifts of those gentlemen, who were both distinguished for wit, pleasantry, anecdote, and that easy play of fancy which illuminates with transient charm the topic of the hour, and whose manners contrasted favourably with Mr. Channing's absorbed air, his almost judicial moral severity, and his evident distaste for the current trifles which polish the surface of life.

To each of these distinguished men he was bound by ties of strong friendship, and he felt for their talents and acquirements a respect which they cordially reciprocated. Under date of November, 1806, we find Mr. Buckminster thus writing to him from Paris, whither he had been driven to recruit by the malady which so prematurely eclipsed his bright genius.

"Before this reaches you, you will be restored, I trust, to your people; for truly I am very anxious for the religious situation of Boston, deprived, as it now is, in three societies, of regular pastors. I am sometimes ashamed of myself, when I think that I am here in Paris in perfect idleness, while you are sinking under the labours of your ministry. But God grant that we may be able to congratulate each other next summer, upon meeting, as I hope we shall, in health, and taught by our sufferings to cherish more carefully than ever this inestimable gift of our Maker, and not to draw upon it too fast, so that we may use it longer and more sacredly in the service of our people and for the interests of truth. Farewell, my dear friend! I pray that I may soon hear of your perfect recovery. Remember my dear people as often as you can.

"Your friend and brother,

"J. S. B."

For Mr. Samuel C. Thacher, too,—who studied divinity under his care, and who became the beloved minister of the New South church, when Dr. Kirkland was called to the station that, after 1810, he filled with so much honour to himself and to the institution, of the presidency of Harvard University,—he cherished the warmest esteem, to which Mr. Thacher responded by most reverent love.

"The many admirable principles I have heard from you," writes his young friend, "I shall endeavour always to recollect, and it shall be my prayer to the Giver of all good, that I may not be unworthy the regard of the virtuous and wise. Remember me with much love to your brother, and believe me, my dear Sir, with all possible gratitude and affection, your friend,

"S. C. T."

On the occasion of this young brother's settlement,—whose opening talents and virtues Mr. Channing watched with the most tender interest, by whose example he felt him-

self animated, and to whom he was constantly more and more closely bound by harmony in views and spiritual sympathy,— he entered the following reflections in his journal:—

"1811, May 16. This week is peculiarly eventful and interesting. Yesterday I assisted at the ordination of my friend S. C. Thacher. I presented him the right hand of fellowship. This event should recal to me the day when I devoted myself to the Christian ministry. Have I been a faithful, diligent minister, inquiring for every means of doing good to my people, and devoted most sincerely to their improvement? Let me be quickened by this event, which has connected with me a young man whom I esteem and love. Let me confer with him on the means of benefiting our societies. Let me save him, if possible, from my errors. Let me avoid every feeling of rivalship. Merciful God, render him a better man and Christian than myself. Have I made sufficient sacrifices to the young men who have studied with me? Have I paid attentions, instead of expecting them? Let me endeavour to excite my young brother to great fervour and activity, and let me catch the same warmth from him. I fear, I feel, that I and my brethren are not sufficiently engaged, and not desirous enough to see fruits from our labours. I am not ready to live a suffering life for Jesus Christ. My Saviour! may I think of thy cross, of what thou hast endured for human happiness, and may I count it my highest honour to be a partaker of thy sufferings."

And again he thus writes of him to a friend :—

"Heaven can hardly bestow on me a greater blessing than the friendship of Thacher. The purity of his character and life, and his devotion to his profession, render him peculiarly important to us at this time."

Thus cordial, honourable, mutually beneficial, and every way manly, were the relations between these friends, and a large circle of their brethren. But the days of one of the noblest of them were numbered. On the 9th of June, 1812, the sad tidings of the death of Buckminster threw the whole community into grief. How deeply Mr. Channing mourned with others the destruction of the hopes which clustered round this gifted and accomplished man appears from many of his papers of that period. He was himself absent at the time from home; but when he came back, he preached by

request a funeral sermon before the Brattle Street Society, and to his own people spoke as follows:—

"On returning to this place, I am not permitted to see and embrace a Christian brother, a fellow-labourer in the gospel, whom I left in the midst of usefulness,—one of the brightest ornaments of his profession, and of this country,—whose vigour of mind, whose eloquence, whose piety, whose sincere devotion to the interests of Christianity, I have witnessed with increasing pleasure and increasing hope. But God, who imparted to this highly favoured servant such unusual gifts, who kindled this superior intellect, has suddenly removed him from his wide sphere of honour and usefulness. That you followed to the tomb this righteous man with serious thought and sorrowful reflection I cannot doubt. My own heart sunk within me, when I heard the painful tidings of his death. I felt for the loss I had experienced as an individual; but this sorrow was faint, compared with my painful sense of the heavy loss which our churches had experienced."

And in a letter he thus expresses himself:—

"Buckminster's death gives me many painful and solicitous feelings in relation to the interests of religion in this place. People here, as you well know, are attached to religious institutions, not so much by a sense of the value of religion as by their love to their minister; and I fear that their zeal will grow cold, when their ministers are removed. I wish that there were more attachment to the truth, and less to the man who delivers it. The loss of Mr. Buckminster appears to me irreparable. I know no man who unites so many gifts from nature, so many acquisitions from study, and such power of rendering religion interesting to all classes of society, especially to the improved, the polished, the fashionable."

As a last act of honour to this already celebrated preacher, he, with Mr. S. C. Thacher, Mr. Buckminster's more particular friend, was requested to select and prepare a portion of his sermons for the press.

"Mr. Buckminster's papers," writes Mr. George Ticknor, "came into my hands after his death, so that I had a good deal to do with this publication—a circumstance which I mention as accounting for my knowledge of the facts in relation to it. Mr. Channing undertook it, I think, with in-

terest and pleasure, and gave a good deal of time to it; though of course the labour and responsibility came chiefly on Mr. Thacher. The three sermons on Faith, and the sermon on Philemon, attracted, I believe, more of his attention than any others. In the last, an omission was made at his suggestion; but it may be worth notice, in reference to the opinions he afterwards entertained on the subject, that the strong phrases in the discourse that touch slavery did not excite his attention. At least, I am satisfied that he made no remarks about them: and I remember the way in which he went over the whole of the sermon. What most struck me, throughout his examination of the manuscripts was his interest in Mr. Buckminster's reputation, and his care that justice should be done to it."

The rule by which he was governed in this work was thus once communicated by himself:—

"Will you allow me to suggest a counsel which I give to those who are publishing posthumous works? It is, to beware of publishing too much. The *best* of a man's writings should be selected, with somewhat fastidious criticism, for the press; and care should be taken, lest the best be lost and fail of their effect by being surrounded with much that wants interest, and will not be read. I proceeded on this principle in selecting Mr. Buckminster's sermons, and I think their great success is in part owing to it."

But besides these friends, to whom he was united by the relations of the pastoral office, and the cares and responsibilities, studies and hopes, incident to the ministerial profession, Mr. Channing had others with whom he held intercourse by letter; and some passages, taken from his correspondence at this period, may be of interest, as yet further illustrating his character. They will be suitably prefaced by one in which he pleasantly alludes to the stiffness of mental and moral habits, contracted by too monotonous an absorption in his own pursuits.

"1812. The great objection I have to writing letters is, that I can hardly do so without beginning to preach. I have composed sermons till I can with difficulty write anything else. I exhort when I should smile. Not that I think a letter should be written without a desire to do good; but instruction should be delivered with somewhat less formality

than from the pulpit. I will try, however, to lay aside my grave countenance sometimes."

"1805. Your books seem to give you an independence on the world which riches never bestowed. I esteem it one of the greatest blessings of my life, that I have been taught to read, and that I am permitted to converse in books with some of the best and greatest of my fellow-beings who have ever existed. If I should be spared to your age, and be permitted to rest a little while before I go down to the grave, I think this would form my habitual source of comfort and pleasure. With a book in my hand, I should meet the evils of life, and forget its anxious cares. I think we are not sufficiently grateful for the invention of printing. I know not that I ever mentioned it in my prayers, but it has done me more good than food and raiment. I depend on my book as on my daily bread."

"1807. I have very little to say about myself. My health and spirits are tolerably good. Were I allowed to choose, I would ask for ability to apply more to my studies; but I believe that all things are ordered aright. I know already more than I practise myself, and more than I communicate to others. Why, then, should I be so anxious to add to my stock of knowledge? I have a strong propensity to lead the life of a recluse and a bookworm; and, perhaps, if I were able to study all the time, I should neglect the active duties of my profession. At present I am driven from my study every day by the unpleasant sensations which long application produces. With this exception, I am quite well. My life is very tranquil. I *will* not mingle with the contentions of the world. Angry politicians and theologians are raging around me, but I try not to hear; and if this is impossible, I avail myself of my defect of memory, and forget the clamour. Certainly life is too short, its duties too numerous and weighty, to leave us much time to waste in altercation."

"1808. This is my birth-day. I have been looking back on the blessings which have filled up my existence. The last year, I find, has been crowned with mercies; and in acknowledging the unmerited goodness of God, I cannot but thank him that he has put it into the heart of so kind a friend to take such an interest in my welfare, and to express toward me so much tenderness and affection. All my life long, God has been raising up to me benefactors. I never

experienced the want of a friendly hand to support me. O that with his blessings he would give me a heart to be grateful for them! Give me your prayers, that the next year of my life may be more useful than the last; that every day may bring me nearer to heaven; that I may feel more of the power of religion, that God would condescend to use even me as an instrument in advancing his cause in the world."

"1809. I feel more and more that I am doing little good; but I blame myself as much as others. Since you have been absent, I have felt more debilitated than usual. I have not been capable of much mental exertion. How much do I need these rebukes to keep me humble! You know the sin which most easily besets me. I have reason to be grateful for the various methods in which God is teaching me my dependence and imbecility."

"1812. *New Year's Day.* The past year has been to us both peculiarly interesting. It has made some important changes in our domestic circles, and it has left, I hope, some salutary impressions on ourselves and our friends. I look back on it with much humiliation. I fear that my sufferings have not refined me as they ought. I am sure that my blessings have not left that tender sense of the Divine goodness which I wish ever to maintain. . . . . My increasing duties require increasing activity, and sometimes they suggest many painful fears and forebodings. Pray for me, that I may be faithful and useful. . . . . .

"I recollect on this day the kindness and affection which you have expressed toward me with so much uniformity and tenderness, since I first knew you. Your friendship I have valued as one of the great blessings of my life, and I hope it will not forsake me in any prosperous or adverse changes which may await me. . . . . .

"I know that I have many friends,—perhaps few are more favoured than I. But still I cannot spare you. How much of the happiness, and I may add of the usefulness, of my life do I owe to your tender, unremitting kindness! How often have I been kept from fainting by your cheering voice! Do not say that I am inclined to exaggerate your offices of friendship. I cannot express what I feel. I have often felt that your partiality to me was unmerited, but I am not just enough to wish it diminished. It has become one of my highest earthly blessings. It is one of the few blessings to which I look forward with confidence. I feel that many other

friends may fail, but I feel a strange assurance that no changes can sever us from each other. Is it not religion, that indissoluble bond, which unites us?"

"1808. You will not forget, no, not for a moment, that it is God, the best of beings, the kindest of fathers, who gave you the parent you have lost, and to whom you are indebted for all the kind support, the tender care, the faithful admonitions which you have received from your beloved and revered friend,—that it is he who wounds and corrects you. In the perfection of his character, in the wisdom, rectitude, and mercy of his providence, in the truths and promises of his gospel, in his compassion for the fatherless, you will find, I trust, consolation and support. Do not distrust him, who is love,—who is a father when he rebukes, and who rebukes because he is a father, because he is interested in our welfare, because he sees that we have sins which need correction, because he designs to purify us for his presence in heaven. I know the strength of your feelings. I do not expect that at the first moment of affliction you will be able to fix a steady, unwavering eye on the precious truths of our religion. God, who knows that we are dust, permits us to mourn, and I trust compassionates rather than condemns the mourner who sinks under the first stroke of unexpected calamity;—but you will not, I hope, long forget the presence and the righteous will of God. You will open your mind to the supporting views which Christianity affords of the purposes of affliction. With sorrow you will unite patience, confidence, humility, and hope."

"1809. Unless I am deceived, you have much to learn, and perhaps much to suffer, before you will deserve to be called happy. Happiness is the *uniform serenity* of a well-governed mind, of disciplined affections, of a heart steadily devoted to objects which reason and religion recommend. According to my tame imagination, Happiness is a very demure lady,—almost as prim as the wives of the Pilgrims of New England. She smiles, indeed, most benignantly, but very seldom laughs; she may sigh, but seldom sobs; the tear may start into her eye, the tear of gratitude and of sympathy, but it seldom streams down the cheek. Her step is sometimes quickened, but she does not waste her spirits and strength in violent and unnatural efforts. She cultivates judgment more than fancy. She employs imagination, not to dress up airy fictions, not to throw a false, short-lived

lustre over the surrounding scenery, but to array in splendour distant objects which reason assures her are most glorious and excellent, but which, from their distance, are apt to fade away before the eye, and to lose their power over the heart. Now I confess that my ideas of happiness and those of my friend —— do not perfectly coincide. Time and affliction, however, will bring them nearer to each other. Perhaps reflection may render affliction less necessary."

"1811. In the beginning of this letter, I have alluded to an affliction which I have been called to sustain. It has pleased God this week to remove from us a friend in whom I have long felt a strong and increasing interest. You undoubtedly heard of her frequently, whilst you lived in this town; but her character, her worth, you probably never knew. It has been my privilege and happiness, for some time, to enjoy an intimacy with this singular woman, this highly favoured child of God. She has been a great sufferer for several years, but she has suffered so meekly and patiently, her character has been so refined and elevated by suffering, she embraced all around her with such a strong and tender affection, amidst pains which would have rendered others insensible to all but themselves, she discovered such unabated energy of mind at the moment that her emaciated frame seemed just ready to resign its breath, that I have contemplated her with a delight and admiration which very few of our race have inspired. I have understood that in early life she was the victim of sensibility; and indeed it was easy to see that her feelings tended to excess. But religion, that refining and subduing principle, exerted its kindest influence on her heart. She was called to a struggle peculiarly arduous, but she was conqueror. I cannot mourn for her departure; yet it is a thought which almost saddens me, that I am no more to hear her animated voice, no more to commune with that powerful mind, that warm and pure heart, on this side the grave. But to her pious and virtuous friends she is not lost; there is society in heaven."

"1810. I am not insensible to commendation. I will go farther. There is a commendation which affords me an exquisite satisfaction,—I mean a commendation which flows from an unaffected love of goodness, and from a desire to confirm it. Such commendation confers more honour on those who give than on him who receives it, and shows him that he has a place, not in the admiration of a superficial mind, but

in the affections of a good, pure heart. Of this praise I can almost adopt the language of Henry the Fifth,—

> 'If it be a sin to covet honour,
> I am the most offending soul alive.'

But to be 'daubed with undiscerning praise,' to have my frailties forced on my mind by being told that I have none, to receive a tribute which my heart disclaims, and which fills me with apprehension lest I have been a hypocrite, and have practised concealment more effectually than most of my fellow-beings,—this is indeed painful and humiliating. You will not think that I mean to apply *all* this to *you;* but in your letter you have 'o'erstepped the bounds' of that discretion which I wish you to observe. You throw your colours on your friends too profusely. Humanity is but another word for imperfection. It is a distempered vision which represents it as faultless. I cannot tell you, my dear friend, how much more I should have been gratified, if you had frankly disclosed to me the observations you must have made on my character, and had set before me the weaknesses, defects, disproportions, blemishes, which must have forced themselves on so discerning an eye."

"1812. I thank them for their good opinion; but to *you* I will say, that I feel almost an insuperable reluctance to visit, and much more to preach, where people have taken it into their heads that they are to see or hear anything uncommon. In my own breast I carry a conviction which contradicts all such opinions, and renders applause painful and mortifying. The tender affection which you express is indeed delightful, though I feel it is not altogether deserved; but fame, general notice, is not my right, and I pray God that it may never be my wish or end."

"1810. I would not have you think that any human friendship is of itself sufficient to raise you to the excellence I have fancied. There is another source to which you must repair. It is a most consoling doctrine of our religion, that the Father of Spirits delights to perfect the works which he has made, that he has sent his Son to renew his own image in the human heart, that he inspires the love of virtue, that he hears the aspirations and assists the efforts of every soul which desires to be emancipated from its earthly and selfish propensities. . . . . .

"I am very willing that you should dissent from the

opinion I have expressed of Hume. When I reviewed that part of my letter, I feared that I had been declamatory rather than convincing; that I had carried my principle too far. It is a fault which I have often observed in my character, that I am prone to overstate an argument,—to infer too much from my premises,—to exhibit a truth without the necessary limitations. I want to make an impression, and defeat my end by demanding a stronger conviction or a more unqualified assent than I have a right to expect. I need to seek the excellence for which Bishop Butler is so remarkable,—I mean that of being so cautious and modest in his inferences, that his readers not only concede the positions for which he contends, but almost blame him for not demanding more. This habit conciliates great confidence for a writer; and we are naturally impressed with the strength of his cause, when we see him able to support it without straining a single argument, or even carrying it to its fair extent. Some people, rather than lose a good metaphor, or a fine sentence, are often tempted to assert what is not altogether accurate; and they have their reward. They astonish, but do not convince. They strike, but do not keep their hold of the mind. May you and I love *Truth* better than *Rhetoric*."

"1810. If I were to differ from you on the subject of history, it would be in giving a stronger preference to biography than you seem to do. General history, indeed, discovers to us human beings in a great variety of circumstances; but it shows us beings principally of *one class* of character, and it brings them before us in their *maturity*, after their characters are formed.

"History transmits to us almost exclusively those men who have had sway over nations. It shows us the ambition which proposes to itself dominion, in an endless variety of forms,—now plotting in the cabinet, now shedding torrents of blood in the field of battle. I will not say that there is not much important instruction to be derived from this exhibition of human character; but is it the *most* important to such beings as you and I, who would not receive a crown for a gift,—who fill, from necessity and choice, the humbler walks of life,—whose objects, temptations, hopes, and fears are so very different from those which history unfolds? The page of history is so crowded with heroes and statesmen that it cannot admit people like us, although our dimensions are so very small. It has not a place even in the margin for the

minister and the schoolmistress. It is too blood-stained to be the record of those peaceful virtues, which as Christians we should seek to infuse into our hearts.

"Again, general history shows us only men in their maturity, after they have come forward on the public stage. It seldom carries us back and shows us by what influences the character which we behold was gradually formed. It presents the full-grown man. I want to see him in his cradle, and trace him thence to his height of glory or his depth of guilt. I want to see him when he is not acting his part, in that common, every-day intercourse which reveals the man as he is. Now biography seems to me to give these advantages. It shows us every form and every stage of character; it shows us excellence which is not the less worthy of admiration because it was not called forth into public life. It makes us the friends, the domestic companions, and the private witnesses of the good man.

"Let me just add, that young minds, unless carefully guarded, often receive injurious impressions from history. They see the ambitious exerting such vast power and enjoying such splendid success, that they are dazzled and overwhelmed; they form false ideas of greatness, become reconciled to wars, and sympathize so strongly with the towering oppressor, that they feel no concern for the nations he desolates."

"1811. I need not introduce the following advice, or labour to secure it a favourable reception, by assuring you of the sincere affection from which it flows. You know that I have felt no common interest in your situation, and I must believe that you will ascribe the admonitions I am to offer to the desire of contributing to your usefulness and happiness. The confidence you have reposed in me encourages and even binds me to speak with frankness. Some of my remarks may appear too minute, but your success depends very much on your attention to little things.

"It is of the first importance, that you impress the people amongst whom you are to live with a conviction of your steadiness and stability of character. I feel no little solicitude on this point. If once you are considered thoughtless, volatile, and injudicious, your prospect of success is gone. Your talents will be of little avail. Parents cannot be blamed for requiring a considerate character in those to whom they commit their children. This impression of steadiness you must

make, not only by your unwearied attention in school, but by your deportment and appearance at other seasons. You will be cheerful, but not gay. In your manners you cannot but be easy, but you must avoid everything which approaches wildness. In your dress you cannot but discover taste; but it will be better to fall below, than to rise above, the common standard of fashion in the place where you live. Do not act from the impulse of the moment; but deliberate before you decide. You know what is meant by the word *judgment*. I hope you will possess it, and I hope you will be thought to possess it. In conversation you will not forget that you are among strangers, and that this situation requires a caution and reserve to which you have never before been called. You must also remember, that in a small town it is the fashion to repeat what ought to be forgotten. Let not your spirits run away with you. Be not extravagant in expressing delight and admiration. Do not aim at shining much. You will be brilliant enough without effort. Seek esteem and confidence rather than admiration. Admirers are not friends; and for one who admires, there are twenty to envy and discover faults. Do not make other people subjects of conversation. You will see and hear much, perhaps, to displease you; but, as you are going to instruct the young, and not to reform the old, you may hold your peace with a safe conscience. Be very cautious in forming intimacies. Your respectability, as well as your happiness, requires that you should attach yourself to persons of improved hearts and understandings,—of solid worth, of acknowledged excellence. Indulge in company with moderation. Learn to be happy in yourself, and at home. Partake sparingly of public amusements, and religiously deny yourself every pleasure inconsistent with the active, faithful discharge of your daily duties. I am very desirous that you should avoid the character of a fashionable woman, and you will remember this character is fixed on a person more easily in a small than in a large town. You know the great circumspection required of a young lady who lives alone, without parent, guardian, or brother. Your occupation will render exercise necessary, perhaps every day. Do not think me too minute, if I advise you to vary your walks, and to walk in retired parts of the town. Here end my prudential rules. You will forgive me when I tell you, that I have written to you just as I should to my sisters. You must have learnt not to trust to the candour of the

world. Give them, if possible, not one ground for questioning your steadiness of character.

"Now for your school. Endeavour to introduce the most perfect system at the beginning, and be very slow to admit any change which inexperienced people may think very good, unless its utility be obvious. Pay great attention to the order of your school, and to the manners of the children; and when they leave you, see that they retire with silence and regularity. I need not urge it upon you to unite with this strict discipline, great mildness, and perfect freedom from passion. I wish that you would introduce some religious exercises. Let the Scriptures be daily read, in a reverential manner, by yourself or by some good reader in the school. Be careful to teach every branch thoroughly. A school is lost when it gets the character of being showy and superficial. Let me conclude with urging you to enter into the spirit of your occupation. Learn to love it. Try to carry into it a little enthusiasm. Let it not be your task, but your delight. Feel that Providence is honouring you in committing to you the charge of immortal minds. Study the characters of your pupils, and the best modes of exciting and improving them. You have heart enough; fix it on this noble object. And now, my dear friend, be of good courage. Bear up, with a calm, steady resolution, under the trials of life. Lift your eyes, with gratitude and confidence, to your Father in heaven, and he will never forsake you. Wherever you go, you will be surrounded with his presence; and if you approve yourself his humble, faithful child, you cannot but be happy. To his providence I commend you."

Thus warm were Mr. Channing's sympathies, in the home circle, in his congregation, towards his brethren in the ministry, and to many friends. They were not limited, however, to these spheres, but widened to embrace the wants of all his fellow-men in the community in which he dwelt. The poor were especially objects of his regard, many of whom freely visited him; and he had always several destitute families under his care. His liberality, indeed, was so unbounded, that his elder brother once said,—"Really, William should have a guardian; he spends every dollar as soon as he gets it." And so he actually did. With a good salary, he was yet always poor,—so utter was his dislike to accumulation, and so little anxious was he for the morrow; but, as he seldom mentioned his deeds of kindness, comparatively few of them

are particularly known. Many letters, however, which yet remain, prove how varied, numerous, judicious, and patient were his labours to cheer, encourage, and redeem the unfortunate. And when his own means were exhausted, rich and generous friends in his society made him their almoner. To one of these he writes—"I shall, indeed, consider it a great blessing to myself, as well as to you, to be able to suggest opportunities of usefulness; and I shall do this more readily, if you resolve never to oppose your own judgment out of respect to my feelings." And again he says—"I thank God that he permits me to communicate to you the thanks of the poor and afflicted. . . . . Rejoice that, through you, praise has ascended to heaven,—joyful praise from the lips of a man just trembling over the grave. I feel myself indebted to you for the benevolence you exercise to others. . . . . May you yet more earnestly espouse the interest of the Redeemer, and imitate his meek and condescending love." Thus was he doubly a benefactor, by presenting to the wealthy opportunities to bestow on the needy the gifts which God had intrusted to their guardianship.

"I never heard him speak of giving pecuniary aid to any one," says one of his sisters; "but facts speak for themselves. He must have had a thousand dollars to lay out, of which he spent scarcely anything upon himself, except in case of sickness, or when he had to take a journey. He never had money for any length of time, and I have no doubt that he always disposed of it nearly as fast as he received it. We must believe that he gave away nearly eight hundred a year, and I have known many times when he had nothing. In all his feelings he was large and noble. I remember, on one occasion, he had attended the funeral of a gentleman of fortune, and afterwards had visited the afflicted family. The widow, wishing to express her gratitude, inclosed him fifty dollars in a note. It was a sore trial to him. He could not bear to wound the feelings of the lady by a refusal: and yet, to accept it was not to be thought of. He returned it, and, I am sure, in doing so, found some way not to pain another by sparing himself. Think, for one moment, that any one could have offered *money* to such a being, as a return for his sympathy; but then it was so kindly meant on her part, that I could not mention it even now, if she had not long been numbered among the dead. She only did not know him. He was as wise, too, as he was generous, and I never saw any one who

more truly understood the value of money for the benefit of others, or who cared less for it himself."

One slight anecdote shows his disposition in this respect. As he was taking a journey alone in a chaise, he was induced by the appearance of poverty about a dwelling to stop and inquire after the condition of the inmates. He found a very old couple, helpless and wretched; and after conversing with them some time as to their simple life, he bade them farewell, leaving in their hands his purse. He had ridden some miles before it occurred to him that his horse would suffer, though he might not, from his penniless condition; when, finding himself in the neighbourhood of an acquaintance, he borrowed the necessary sum to carry him on his way.

His journals are interesting here, also, as showing how comprehensive at once and minutely exact was his charity, in devising benefit for the suffering. There are long and full lists of the various classes of the community who needed care or aid; sketches of their peculiar trials, temptations, and difficulties; suggestions for public works, benevolent operations, special reforms; and hints of all kinds as to the duties which society owes to its members. But a few extracts will speak for themselves.

"Things to be done in town.—Comfortable houses to be let cheap for the poor. Innocent and improving amusements. Interesting works to be circulated among them. Associations among mechanics for mutual support if reduced. Complete course of instruction for youth designed for active life. Dr. Lathrop's plan of education. Justices' salaries to be fixed; their fees; small debts; petty suits; oppression of the poor. Taverns; drinking-parties; a work on ardent spirits should be written. Fire-clubs. Apprentice-boys at bad houses; &c."

"Poor-house.—Rooms to be better aired. There should be selection in assigning rooms. Tracts to be circulated there. Let me visit them once a week. They want plain, pious, unambitious, evangelical ministry; they want that gospel which teaches contentment in every state. An association of females to furnish them employments. Neatness should be prescribed. Great regularity in their exercises. Mutual respect required; decency of manners to each other."

"Causes of poverty to be traced. Charity is not enough directed. Intimate acquaintance with poor families. Em-

ployment found. Econom cal improvements. Store-houses. Provisions of wood in large quantities at cheap prices, and so with all necessaries of life; to be bought at cheap seasons, and sold in large quantities. Rumford boilers."

"Excite no feeling of dependence. Stimulate to exertion. Relief, such as to call out energy, and remove whatever disheartens and disables."

"How much capacity there is in the poorer classes of knowledge and affection! Why is it not developed? Is not the social order bad? Cannot all the capacities of all classes be called forth? Cannot men's motives in pursuing wealth be purified? Cannot a strong conviction be established, that Christ's precepts in the plain sense are the only rule for Christians? Cannot the power of fashion and opinion, except in so far as they may be sanctioned by Christianity, be subverted?"

"Employ religious schoolmistresses in different parts of the town. The children of the poor need special care."

In this project he was at this time much interested, and was instrumental, in connexion with others, in establishing primary schools—being prompted by the considerations, that, by such a provision,

"The parents are relieved from a great burden, especially in the winter; the children are kept for many hours of the day at least out of the streets, where every vice is contracted, and from the crowded, unwholesome rooms, where they too often witness the worst examples; their faculties are in a measure called forth and improved; they acquire some habits of order, application, and industry; are trained to decency of manners, dress, and appearance; become fitted for the business of life, and are instructed in the Scriptures and the duties of morality."

"A bakehouse for the poor, established by a fund for their use; an association of the poor, contributing so much a week for a fund to support them in sickness; associations for relief of the sick, old, debtors, and for the employment of those who are without work."

"What can be done to exalt the poor and ignorant from a life of sense to an intellectual, moral, religious life? How excite an interest in the education of their children? Let me learn to extemporize, that I may administer plain instruction. May not the mind be quickened by interesting the heart in religion? The Divine character, peculiarly as

displayed in Christianity, is the great means of exalting human nature. The poor need moral remedies. *Let the poor be my end.*"

"Let each rich family have some poor under their care; especially Christian families. Mention the poor to others. Connect the poor with good families."

"There should be an association to receive prostitutes, when reduced by want and disease, to reform and employ them. A house necessary, and one walled, &c. The object, seclusion, support, and rendering them useful. A strong aversion to licentiousness should be awakened."

"Immigrants. A society of advice. They are subjects of speculation, exposed to unprincipled men. They want direction, friends. Keep them out of the way of designing people. They depend on the wants of landholders, &c."

"Africans. To enable them better to manage the affairs of this life; to acquire support, property; to elevate their desire of pleasure above sense, to social enjoyments and improvement of mind. I wish them to be thinking persons, to act from thought. Their modes of life would vary, if instruction was early given. A school may interest them. Their present evils—dirt, bad air, crowded rooms, and their poverty—originate in thoughtlessness, intemperance, &c. In learning they will find new pleasures, and be less tempted to irregularity. We must give them new tastes. What powers, how much *mind*, how much *heart*, what treasures, are contained in them! Shall all be lost? Awaken a sense of their true dignity and true excellence, and so prevent vain attention to dress, &c. Is it not possible to make a party among them in support of religion? May there not be a line of distinction drawn among them, and a sense of character awakened?"

These extracts from papers and journals, extending through the first years of his ministry, show how early and how earnestly his sympathies went out to his fellowmen of every condition. He seems to have wished—to quote again his diary—"to associate with all classes, to know their wants, and to become acquainted with the world in which I am placed." His longing was for nothing less than humanity made universal. The spirit that dictated his enthusiastic letters from Richmond was working in him still, and prompting him to seek for every practicable mode of redeeming man from the inhuman degradations to which tens of thou-

sands are subject in a society selfish in its principles, laws, customs, maxims, influences, tendencies. He saw that actual life in Christian communities is a hideous mockery of the generally professed discipleship to Him whose last symbolic act was to gird himself with a towel and to wash his disciples' feet: whose test of distinction was, "Let him that would be greatest among you be the servant of all," and who left as his dying legacy the new commandment, "*As* I have loved you, *so* love ye one another."

But these charities within his immediate neighbourhood, extensive as they were, did not exhaust Mr. Channing's interest in his race. In the growing prevalence of order, justice, freedom, over the internal legislation of the nations of Christendom, and of humanity and peace through their diplomatic, commercial, and intellectual intercourse, he saw a providential process, by which the scattered societies of earth are becoming transformed and reunited into the kingdom of heaven,—a slow process indeed to human sight, and one accompanied by trial and struggle, but yet a sure one. And thus believing, he thought that a minister of the glad tidings, of universal goodwill, was so far from being exempt from the duties of a citizen, that he was, on the contrary, under special obligation to infuse, as he best could, the spirit of love, the hope of a higher future for mankind, the sense of responsibility to a superhuman authority, into the hearts of his fellows,—heated as they were by partisan passions, and turned from their rightful function of mutual beneficence by worldly jealousies.

From early youth he had been, as we have observed, conversant with political movements; he had been bred up in ardent attachment to liberty under constitutional limits; he had shared in the exhilarating anticipations first excited by the French Revolution, and in the revulsion of shame and sorrow produced by its after excesses; he had watched the triumphs of the "armed apostle of democracy," till he had seen him rear his throne of universal empire upon prostrate states, which fell bravely struggling for independent national existence; and now, in common with many of the best and wisest around him, he feared, as an event by no means impossible, that the United States might be needed as an ark for freedom, when the deluge of despotism had overswept Europe. In a word, he was at this time thoroughly in principle and affections a Federalist. Later in life his sentiments

and convictions underwent a great change in regard to this tremendous crisis in modern history. But at the period now under consideration he was opposed with his whole soul and strength to "French principles." To him these were identical with atheism, vice, and moral ruin, with licentious self-will in private manners, and despotism alternating with radical lawlessness in government. In their triumph he foresaw, as he thought, the downfall of the cross. Thus judging, how could he do otherwise, as a brave and single-hearted man, than strive to check their growing power?

Accordingly, in his Fast and Thanksgiving sermons, from which extracts will hereafter be given, he entered freely into the consideration of national dangers and duties, and brought men and measures to the test of the Christian standard. In this course of conduct he had the sanction of such men as Dr. Osgood and Dr. Kirkland; but many of his brethren condemned him for desecrating the dignity of the pulpit by the introduction of such topics, and large numbers of the laity were indignant at his presumption, as they considered it, and officious intermeddling in matters beyond his sphere. As this was the period of the embargo and the last war, when commerce was prostrate and industry languished,—when the bond of the Union was almost severed by civil strife, and angry controversies prevailed in public and private,—when family ties and old friendships were rudely broken by political dissensions,—when the circles of social intercourse were limited to those who adopted the same party creeds, and men rose or fell in the scale of esteem as their opinions varied,—when in the theatre the shouts of "*Ca ira*," and "God save the king," alternately drowned each other, when angry mobs tore unpopular editors from the jails where they were put for safety,—and when, in a word, the nation was convulsed,—it can easily be understood that a preacher who espoused the cause of either of the contending bodies was forced to bear the brunt of severe censure, and to be made the object of exaggerated praise. To Mr. Channing one of these results was as distasteful as the other; but as several of his sermons were printed, and thus became widely known, he largely experienced both. Some critics went so far as to ascribe to him no better motive for overstepping the usual lines of pulpit discussion, than that of seeking the notoriety which he thus met; a charge, to be sure, which seemed sufficiently absurd to those who knew the man, and which his friends

might have fully answered by stating the facts, that he had declined to deliver the Phi Beta Kappa oration before Harvard University from aversion to appear in public, that he habitually shunned various opportunities for displaying his talents, and held back from even the literary enterprises in which he was well qualified to excel, because he feared lest he might thus be led astray from the more appropriate duties of his profession. But he knew his own heart, and year by year went steadily on his course of giving with perfect frankness such warnings and rebukes as he deemed timely.

In these trials he had in private the faithful counsel of his brother Francis, who was a firm and earnest advocate of the same political views, and in public he received the support of some of the most distinguished of his fellow-citizens; for this was the day when Governor Strong communicated the stern resolution of his character to the councils of the State, when George Cabot with his pen and tongue cast over perplexed subjects the clear light of his sagacious judgment; when Fisher Ames held private circles and public assemblies spell-bound by the charm of his rich eloquence, and when Boston and Massachusetts generally were strongly enlisted on the Federal side. His decided action had the effect of adding to his celebrity and influence; and he took at this time in public respect the position which he held through the rest of life. Thenceforward he was known as a man of unfaltering principle, at once temperate and bold, slow to form opinions, but fearless to maintain them, thoroughly to be depended upon in the most trying scenes, ready to follow through good or ill report his conviction of right, and who always

> "walked attended
> By a strong-siding-champion, Conscience."

Thus passed the first ten years and more of Mr. Channing's ministerial life. They were uneventful, but inwardly rich in results; and many good seeds then planted themselves, which were afterwards to bear abundant fruits. Inherited errors, too, not a few, in thought and practice, had been slowly outgrown, so slowly, that he was perhaps unconscious of the change which had been wrought in his principles. Above all, he had learned the lesson of keeping true to his purest, highest self, or, to express the same fact more humbly and justly, of being obedient to the Divine will, however revealed to his inmost reason. Goodness had firmly enthroned

itself as the reigning power in his nature. He lived the life communicated from above. He was becoming yearly and daily more and more a child of God.

From his very entrance on a public career, he produced upon all who came into his presence the impression of matured virtue and wisdom, and inspired reverence though young. He wore an air of dignity and self-command, of pure elevation of purpose, and of calm enthusiasm, that disarmed familiarity. Careful of the rights of others, courteous and gentle, he allowed no intrusions upon himself. He was deaf to flattery, turned at once from any mention of his own services or position, paid no compliments, and would receive none; but, by constant reference to high standards of right, transferred the thoughts of those with whom he held intercourse from personal vanity to intrinsic excellence, and from individual claims to universal principles. He gave no time to what was unimportant, made demands upon the intellect and conscience of those he talked with, and inspired them with a sense of the substantial realities of existence. In his treatment of others there was no presumption nor partiality. He was deferential to old and young; listened without interruption, and with patience, even to the dull and rude; spoke ill of none, and would hear no ill-speaking; tolerated no levity, but at once overawed and silenced it by wise and generous suggestions: was never hasty, rash, nor impetuous in word or act, and met these weaknesses in others with an undisturbed firmness that disarmed passion while rebuking it. Above all, he recognized in his fellows no distinctions but those of character and intelligence, and, quietly disregarding capricious estimates and rules of mere etiquette, met rich and poor, learned and ignorant, upon the broad ground of mutual honour and kindness. Thus his influence was always sacred and sanctifying; and no better impression can be given of him, as he then appeared, than is presented in his description of the Good Minister, in the sermon—quite famous at the time—which he preached at the ordination of the Rev. John Codman in 1808. Henry Ware, the younger, once said truly, that Mr. Channing had there sketched his own portrait. The passage is as follows, and with it this chapter may most suitably be closed.

"On this occasion, I have thought that it would be useful to dwell on the importance of a zealous and affectionate performance of ministerial duties. On this subject I could wish

to hear rather than to speak. I feel that the place which belongs to me is not that of a confident teacher, but of an humble, self-accusing learner. When I look round on my fathers and brethren in the ministry, whose years and experience and improvements in piety peculiarly fit them for this theme, I feel no faint desire to resign to them the office I am expected to perform. But my feelings and wishes have been overruled; and now that I must speak, I wish to suggest something which will tend to quicken my own heart, which will stir up the minds of my brethren, and which will impress this numerous assembly with the duties and objects, the tremendous responsibility, and the infinitely solemn consequences of the sacred ministry.

"It is the exhortation of Paul to Timothy, 'Be instant in season, out of season;' that is, 'Be urgent, engaged, in earnest, not only at stated seasons of instruction, not only when thine own ease and convenience may permit, but at every season when thou canst hope that truth may be imparted, or serious impressions be produced.' These words furnish us with this practical doctrine, that a minister of Jesus Christ should be distinguished by zeal, earnestness, and affection in the discharge of his sacred office. In the present discourse, I propose to offer a few remarks on the duty enjoined in the text, and then to present considerations suited to enforce it on our consciences and hearts.

"To be instant in season and out of season, is to be cordially devoted to the great object of the Christian ministry. It is to exert on this object the strength of our affections, to make it the centre of our thoughts, and the great end of our labours. In this zeal and earnestness it is implied that our work is our happiness; that we do not make our ministry a means to some further, selfish end; that we do not enter on it from love of ease, or distinction, or gain; but that it is itself our choice, and that we cling to it with an affection which overpowers all private considerations. It is implied that we oversee the flock of God, not from constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but from a ready mind; that the love of Christ bears us away, and that from this love we desire to feed his sheep.

"To be instant in season and out of season is to be carried by affection to habitual, continued efforts for human salvation. It is not to make a few convulsive efforts when our feelings are accidentally warmed, and then to settle down

into supineness and sloth. It is not to confine ourselves to a cold, mechanical round of what we call our duties, and to feel that we have done enough when we have done what is claimed and expected. It is to glow with a desire of success, to stand watching opportunities of doing good to the souls of men. It is to think that we have done nothing, whilst multitudes within our reach are perishing in their sins. It is to think no labour difficult, no sacrifice great, by which men may be saved. It is to explore new means of usefulness; to inquire what peculiar forms of Christian exertion our peculiar conditions and relations may admit; and then to follow with resolute purpose and strenuous effort the plans which approve themselves to our serious judgment. Perhaps there is no profession, no occupation, which encourages so much musing as the profession of a minister. It is very easy and very pleasing to mark out paths of usefulness, to set at work in our imaginations a variety of means from which the happiest effects are to flow. But to *do* as well as to *will*, this is the toil. To be instant in season and out of season, implies that we carry deliberation into practice; that we convert possible into real good; that no discouragements have power to shake those purposes which we deliberately approve; that we wait not to consult ease or opinion, when we have already consulted God and our own consciences; that we press forward in the path of duty, undismayed by the opposition, unabashed by the ridicule, of the world.

"This zeal and earnestness ought to pervade our whole ministerial duties. We should carry it into our *private* studies and devotions. A minister can impart to his people only what he has himself received. His own understanding must be first enlightened, his own heart first kindled, before he can communicate a rational and fervent piety. Hence a minister should apply with zeal to the various means of personal improvement. He should never be contented with his present attainments, never imagine that he has learned all which God has revealed, never say that he has formed his system, and has nothing to do but to preach it. Divine truth is infinite and can never be exhausted. The wisest of us are but children; our views are very dim and narrow; and even where we discern the truth, how faint is its practical impression! Every minister, I think, who studies the Scriptures with a simple heart, must feel that there is much to be cor-

rected in his views of religion. From the difficulty which he finds in making all Scripture easily and naturally harmonize with his own sentiments, or with any other system, he must infer that, even where the truth is held in the greatest purity, it is still blended with not a little error. This conviction, united with a consideration of the influence which he necessarily exerts over the minds of others, should lead him to his Bible with almost trembling solicitude. He ought to bend on it the whole powers of his mind, that he may attain enlarged and consistent conceptions of the Divine character and will. He ought, in his studies, habitually to exert a watchfulness over his mind, lest some unworthy feeling, some narrow interest, some prejudice of education, some attachment to a party, secretly insinuate itself, and incline him to one view of religion rather than another. He ought to unite fervency of prayer with earnestness and freedom of inquiry, and, distrusting himself, seek the better guidance of the Father of Lights and the Spirit of Truth.

"But a minister must not only be earnest in his private studies; he must be urgent and alive in his *public* duties. From his retirement he should bring into the sanctuary a heart glowing with Christian affections. His prayers should discover a mind familiar with God, accustomed to the mercy-seat, elevated by habitual devotion, and breathing without effort the pure and humble desires of a Christian. In preaching, his heart should disclose itself in his sentiments, manner, and style. Whilst unfolding the Divine perfections, he should let men see that they are perfections he himself loves and adores. In enjoining a Christian temper, he should urge it as one who has felt its beauty and power. When describing the promises of the gospel, he should speak with the animation of a holy hope. Whilst directing men to the cross, he should speak as one who has prostrated himself at its foot. This is pulpit eloquence. He should let men see that he has come, not to dazzle them with the studied ornaments of rhetoric, not to play before them the tricks of an orator, but to fix their solicitous attention on the concerns of eternity, to persuade them to be reconciled to God, and to incite them to universal obedience. Let me here mention, that it is highly important that his *manner* be earnest. By this I do not mean a noisy, tumultuous manner. I do not mean that a minister must have lungs of iron and a voice of thunder. Noise and earnestness are very different things.

I only mean that the minister should deliver his message as if he felt its infinite weight, as if his whole soul were interested in its success; and this he may do without being a brawler. In the still, small voice we may discern the language of the heart. I repeat it, this expression of the heart is the perfection of ministerial eloquence. Rules are very useful to teach us what to avoid. But when rules have done all that they can for us, they will leave us chilling preachers, unless we superadd that tenderness and earnestness which an engaged heart can alone breathe through our delivery. May I be permitted to mention the want of this earnestness as a prevalent defect at the present day? My brethren, should not our sleeping hearers, and the faint effects of our ministry, lead us to inquire whether we present religious truth in the most impressive form? Is it asked, how this coldness of manner is to be remedied? Let us not, for this end, mimic feelings we do not possess. Let us rather, before we preach, possess our souls with the importance of the truth we are to deliver. Let us make our discourses truly our own, by catching first ourselves the impressions we wish to make on others. Whilst preaching, let the presence of the Divine Majesty frequently recur to us, that it may extinguish our fear of man, and excite an animating confidence in the blessing of God. Were these our habits, should we not be more interesting preachers?

"But further, the zeal of the minister of Christ should extend beyond the sanctuary. He should carry into his common walks and conversations a mind bent on his great end, and ever ready to seize an opportunity of impressing men with religion. He should particularly labour in his own life, in his own familiar intercourse, to exhibit a uniform and interesting example of the truth he preaches. He should not only be solicitous to preach, but still more to live, Christianity. That minister is not instant in season and out of season, who has learned to excite in himself some momentary feelings, and to employ words and tears of entreaty, whilst in the pulpit; but who comes into the world ready to sympathize with its evil feelings, and to comply like a slave with its tyrannical requisitions.

"Such is Christian zeal. I need not mention that this zeal cannot be maintained without great attention to the government of our desires and passions. The mind and heart can never act vigorously on religion whilst fettered and be-

numbed by any sensual lust, by avarice or ambition. Would we attain the bold and persevering zeal enjoined by the apostle? We must keep under the body; we must partake with rigid temperance of animal pleasure; we must look with holy indifference on worldly wealth and honour; and thus preserve unwasted the energy of our souls, that we may consecrate it to the work which we have voluntarily assumed.

"This genuine Christian earnestness is too rarely seen. Ministers and private Christians are, indeed, very often in earnest; but their zeal is not seldom an unhallowed, destructive fire, kindled at any altar rather than that of God. There are some whose zeal is madness, who place religion in the fervours and ecstasies of a disordered mind, and who shatter their own and others' understanding in a whirlwind of sound. There are some whose zeal is partial; they spend it all on forms and opinions, which, though not unimportant, are not the essentials of Christianity. They compass sea and land, not to make followers of Christ, but converts to their sect. They overlook the heart, that they may rectify the head; and make Christianity, not a vital, inward, efficient principle, expressed in increasing conformity to Jesus Christ, but a dry, cold, barren system of modes and speculations. There are some who are earnest enough, but their earnestness is passionate and irritable. They cannot bear contradiction. They do not address serious argument to the erroneous, and affectionate persuasion to the sinful; but express their zeal in clamour, abuse, hard names, and all the varieties of persecution which their situation places within their reach. There is also a zeal which is the base-born progeny of pride and ambition. It is ever busy and active, for it loves to be seen and heard, and to acquire influence in the church. It is greedy of services which draw attention, and seeks to heighten itself by casting severe reflections on the lukewarmness of others. Remote from all these is true Christian zeal. True zeal is enlightened and judicious, meek and gentle; sensible of its own infirmities, and therefore ready to bear long with others; not devoted to a party, but to the wide interests of Christian piety; not anxious for elevation, but willing to be eclipsed and thrown far behind by the more splendid and useful exertions of others for the common cause of Christianity. So single, disinterested, and fervent, is the zeal which the gospel requires of its ministers."

Chap II. — SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

Æt. 23–34. 1803–1814.

We have followed Mr. Channing through the first ten years of his ministry, and have seen how the living temple was built up within him—from the holy of holies, where Divine Love shone on the tabernacle of conscience, to the outer courts in which even worldly interests were taught to bow before the presence of the All Good. In his hours of prayer and study, truthful earnestness had ministered at the altar; and in the circles of home and society, kindly affections had come up in tribes to worship. His profound experience verified the words,—

> "God many a spiritual house hath reared, but never one
> Where lowliness was not laid first, the corner-stone."

He had entered upon the pastoral office with many doubts and fears, humbled by conscious unworthiness, subdued beneath a sense of the stern realities of earthly discipline, and intent with all his moral energy to lead the heavenly life. His enthusiasm had been concentrated in a solemn purpose of perfect fidelity, and the force of his intellect absorbed in solving the problems of man's degeneracy, and his restoration to dignity and freedom. The feeling that he had assumed the most responsible of human functions, in the performance of whose duties he could not but affect a large number of fellow-beings by the contagion of his inward maladies, or the refreshment of his health, had made him severely scrupulous. And through every act, in all relations, he had offered the petition,—

> "Lord! place me in thy concert, give one strain
> To my poor reed."

His earliest preaching was pathetic, perhaps even sad, in tone. It was full of aspirations after the peace of a will made one with the will of God, and of strict demands for the purest self-denial. But gradually, as he was prepared, the beauty and blessedness of Divine communion streamed in upon his wakeful heart, like the glow of dawn through eastern windows.

This spiritual development we have now to trace, and extracts from his sermons will afford us the surest guidance.

His discourses, indeed, were his best diary. Their topics and the treatment of them were transcribed from the records in his heart; and his reproofs and appeals to his people were but the outward symbol of his own private struggles. In making these extracts, the rule has been kept of selecting such passages as were apparently of most interest to him at the time when they were written, and which are proved to have been the native growth of his mind by containing the views most fully and frequently unfolded by him in later years.

The attentive reader can hardly fail to be impressed with the manifestation of moral and mental *unity* given in these papers. Through modes of thought and expression merely adventitious, a few grand ideas are put forth, at first feeble, but slowly expanding until they absorb into their strong trunks and wide-spread boughs the whole vigour of his life. In sentiment and style, these sermons are original, in the sense that they were not derived from the atmosphere of the surrounding community, or from the leading minds with which Mr. Channing held intercourse. Indeed, there was little resembling them in the preaching at that time prevalent in Boston or New England. They express his deepest consciousness, his intuitions of spiritual realities, his testimony from experience to Providential guardianship, hopes which were gathered from his own devotedness, encouragements which were justified by humble yet glad remembrances of his own success. In the strongest sense of the word, these writings are genuine, and thus truly indicate their author's genius. The unity of his nature yet further appears in the mutual connexion which runs through his doctrines. Each part coheres with the whole; one life organizes them. And finally, his integrity is shown in the steadiness with which he pursued through the remainder of life the avenues of thought thus early opened. From the outset of his course, he was earnestly resolved to be what God designed him for, and to fulfil the special end for which he came. But while original, he was far from being eccentric. He felt no desire to push his views to their extremes, no passion for system-making prompted him, no unqualified statements were hazarded, no extravagant zeal led to reckless positiveness, and imagination threw around his path no delusive glare; but good sense and modesty made him always moderate and mindful of due limits. Again, while true to himself, he was not isolated in his

intellectual aims. On the contrary, his mind was open to the full influences of the age, and his heart beat responsively to the great impulses and longings with which humanity throughout Christendom was then instinct. The chief value, indeed, of these writings is to be found in the fact, that they are the answers of a sincere seeker to the questions which all the leading minds of the time were discussing throughout Europe. They are the observations of a patient student of the skies on this side of the ocean, and so may serve to determine by parallax the orbit of the truths whose light was then just discerned in the firmament.

In the very first sermon which Mr. Channing wrote, he showed the singular consistency of his inward nature by thus expressing the essential principle of all his after thoughts and teachings:—"The end of life, God's one grand purpose, is, to prepare mankind for the holiness and blessedness of heaven by forming them to moral excellence on earth. Redemption is the recovery of man from sin, as the preparation for glory. And all Christian morals may be reduced to the one principle, and declared in one word, LOVE. God is love; Christ is love; the gospel is an exhibition of love; its aim is to transform our whole spirits into love. The perfection of the Divine system is revealed in the mutual dependencies which unite all creatures. All lean upon one another, and give while they receive support. No man is unnecessary; no man stands alone. God has brought us thus near to each other, that his goodness may be reflected from heart to heart. Holiness is light. We glorify God when by imitation we display his character. The good man manifests the beauty of God." Thus he struck the key-note of the symphony, in the evolving of whose melodious strains his whole life was to be passed.

The order adopted in arranging the following extracts is the one chosen by himself for the work which he was engaged in writing at the time of his death, and of which a full notice will be hereafter given. As it was his purpose, in that book, to sum up the results of his inquiries, and to justify his leading views, its general divisions will safely direct us in attempting to trace his upward path.

SECTION FIRST.

RELIGION.

1811. God our Father. "When we conceive of God as a pure Spirit, and dwell on his incommunicable perfections, of which we see no image or resemblance in any beings around us, he eludes the feeble vision of our minds. It is then almost impossible that the affections can be excited and centred upon him. Such views of God furnish us no object on which we can rest, as on a reality. Now the Scriptures invest this pure and infinite Spirit with a character, relations, and qualities which we can comprehend,—such as are continually displayed around us, such as constantly address and touch our hearts, such as we can revolve in thought and meditate upon with ease and delight, such as are attractive and promise happiness; and thus they furnish us the best and most effectual means for exciting and cherishing the love of God. Of all the interesting characters and relations in which the Scriptures, especially the books of the New Testament, exhibit the Supreme Being, that of *Father* is the most common, prominent, striking. . . . . .

"No character could bring God so nigh as this of *the Father*. There is no relation which we know so familiarly as the parental. What name recals so many thoughts and feelings, so many favours and tender remembrances, as that of parent? The Scriptures, then, in giving this view of God, place him before us in a clear, intelligible light. We are not called to dwell on perfections which are utterly incomprehensible, the names of which are sounds in the ear, but excite no ideas in the mind, and which have no tendency to interest the heart. God is our Father. . . . . .

"I fear it has been the influence of many speculations of ingenious men on the Divine character to divest God of that paternal tenderness, which is of all views most suited to touch the heart. I fear we have learnt insensibly to view him as possessing only a general benevolence, which he extends over his wide creation; a benevolence neither very strong nor ardent, not descending to individuals, and not essential to the felicity of the Divine nature. Now this distant and almost indifferent benevolence will hardly seize on our affections. It may please us in moments of calm speculation. It will not inspire a love strong enough to curb our

passions, to compose our sorrows, to influence our lives. For these ends, we need to have other views frequently suggested to us—those views of God's affection for us and for his wide family, which his parental relation to us suggests, and which the kindness of his providence compels us to receive.

"Let me now ask, why these views of God may not be cherished, and why we may not suppose that God has properly the feelings of a father towards us. It is objected, that the supposition implies that God is not infinitely happy in himself, but derives happiness from his creatures; and this derivation, we are told, is dishonourable to God. But I do not perceive that we dishonour God by believing that his creation is a real source of felicity to him, that he finds a real happiness in doing good, and in viewing with complacency obedient, virtuous, and happy children. To me there is no view of God more honourable than this. Is it not the character of a perfect man, that the happiness of others is his own, that he knows no higher joy than to confer and to witness felicity, that his heart responds to the feelings of those around him? And if this is perfection in man, can it be an imperfection in God? Do we, indeed, exalt God, when we represent him as unaffected by the state of his creatures? Next to ascribing malignity to him, what can we say worse of him than this—that he looks on the joys and sorrows of his own creatures without joy and without pity? . . . .

"We cannot see much to envy in the felicity of a being who has no feeling of interest and love extending beyond himself. Deprive God of the happiness of love, and we deprive him of that enjoyment which we have every reason to believe the purest and most inexhaustible in the universe."

1805. LOVE THE PRINCIPLE OF HARMONY IN THE UNIVERSE. "The Christian possesses a great advantage in the contemplation of nature. He beholds *unity* in the midst of *variety*. He looks round on the changing scenery, and in every leaf of the forest, every blade of grass, every hill, every valley, and every cloud of heaven, he discovers the traces of Divine benevolence. Creation is but a field spread before him for an infinitely varied display of *love*. This is the harmonizing principle which reduces to unity and simplicity the vast diversity of nature—this is the perfection of the universe. It clothes in moral glory every object we contemplate. The Christian truly may be said to hear the music

of the spheres. He hears suns and planets joining their melody in praise to their benignant Creator. His ear, and his alone, is tuned to this heavenly harmony. His soul is love."

1811. THE MERCY AND JUSTICE OF GOD. "Mercy is an essential attribute of God, not an affection produced in him by a foreign cause. His blessings are free, and bestowed from a real interest in his creatures,—not purchased from him, and bestowed by another on those whose welfare he disregards. He really loves mankind; and this is the great motive, first cause, and highest spring of their redemption. Thus I have endeavoured to place before you Divine goodness in the glory in which it shines in Scriptures.

"But I must not stop here. This doctrine, whilst obscured by some, is carried to excess by others. There are those who, when they hear of the essential and infinite mercy of God towards even the sinful, imagine that God has no aversion towards sin, and cannot punish. Unhappily the minds of men are prone to run to extremes. They cannot be driven from one sentiment without vibrating to its opposite. Some men, as we have seen, array the Divinity in darkness and terror. God, according to them, is so holy, that he looks on sinners with no feelings but indignation. His anger burns; his sword is unsheathed; it falls more rapidly than the lightning; and nothing saves us from its sharp destruction but the merciful Son, who interposes between us and the descending ruin, receives it into his own breast, and thus appeases the wrathful Deity. When these representations are opposed as inconsistent with the character of Him whose name is Love, who created and who preserves us, the mind is then prone to reject all its former conceptions, and to form a deity altogether insensible to the distinction between good and evil, between holiness and sin,—incapable of feeling displeasure or of inflicting punishment.

"But the Scriptures forbid us to cherish these partial and mutilated views of the Divine character. They teach his essential, self-moved mercy; and this most affecting view of God I would always hold up to you, that you may love him with your whole hearts. Happy should I be, were I permitted to make them my only theme. Happy, indeed, could I hope that no other motive is needed than this,—that the goodness of God, whenever enforced, excites, in all who hear, the sentiments of gratitude, and the purpose of obedience.

But there is reason to fear that some minds are so fallen, that this very doctrine which imposes such obligation is abused to licentiousness, and employed to produce the feeling of security in a sinful course. There are some who think, if they do not say, that, since God is so good, his laws may be broken with impunity. To guard against such a perversion of the doctrine I have enforced, let me repeat, that his mercy is not an undistinguishing fondness; that whilst he compassionates the offending, and has appointed methods for their reformation and forgiveness, he is unchangeably the enemy of sin; that his very character, as the universal Father, requires him to punish and humble the disobedient, selfish, unjust, proud, and impure, to redress every principle and practice opposed to the order and happiness and perfection of his creatures."

1811. REGENERATION. "Is man a Christian by his first birth, or do his early propensities impel him to the cultivation of Christian virtues in proportion as they are known? Do sensual and earthly desires hear the voice of conscience, shrink at once within the limits which reason assigns, and leave the throne of the heart to the Creator? How many desires and habits which conscience forbids are indulged! How many deviations from the path of God's commands are registered in the memory of every man who practises the duty of self-recollection? A religious character, then, is an acquisition, and implies a change; a change which requires labour and prayer, which requires aid and strength from heaven; a change so great and important, that it deserves to be called a *new birth*. The Christian is a new man. Once the dictates of conscience might have been heard; now they are obeyed. Once an occasional gratitude might have shed a transient glow through his heart; now the Divine goodness is a cherished thought, and he labours to requite it by an obedient life. Once his passions were his lords; now he bows to the authority, and waits to hear the will, of God. Once human opinion was his guide, and human favour the reward he proposed; now he feels that another eye is upon him, that his heart and life are naked before God, and to approve himself to this righteous and unerring witness and judge is his highest ambition. Once he was ready to repine and despond when his wishes and labours were crossed; now he sees a Providence in life's vicissitudes, the discipline of a father in his sufferings, and bears his burdens, and performs his duties, with cheerful resignation to him who assigns them. Once he

was sufficiently satisfied with himself, or unwilling to feel his deficiencies; now he is humble, conscious of having sinned, desirous to discover his errors, contrite in his acknowledgments, earnest in his application to Divine mercy, and resolute in his opposition to temptation. Once the thought of a Saviour suffering for human pardon, and rising from the dead to confer immortality, excited little interest; now the promises, love, cross, and resurrection of Jesus come home to him with power, and awaken gratitude and hope. Once he lived chiefly for himself; now he has learnt to love his fellow-beings with a sincere and an efficient kindness, to lose sight of himself in the prosecution of benevolent designs, to feel for the misery, for the sins, of those around him, and to endure labours and sacrifices, that he may give relief to the frail body, and peace and health to the immortal mind. To conclude,—once he was alive to injury, and suffered anger and revenge to direct his treatment of an enemy; now his indignation is tempered by mercy, and he is ready to forgive.

"From this brief sketch, from this comparison of the Christian character with that to which our nature is so prone, do we not see that a great change is required to make men Christians? I do not say that the same change is required in all. I do not say that education has no influence. I do not say, that Christianity, now that it is so widely diffused, and so early enforced on the mind, may not check many passions before they have grown up into habits. But after all the benefits of discipline, we see our nature still weak, erring, yielding to temptation, negligent of known duty. Still, to be Christians, all have much to put off, to subdue, to correct, to renounce; and all have much to put on, to acquire, to cherish. So that the Christian character may still be called a second birth. The best Christians can ordinarily look back to the period, when they were governed by inferior and unworthy principles; when the world was more powerful than conscience and God, or at least when the sense of duty was comparatively faint and uninfluential. By the precepts, doctrines, motives, promises of Christianity, and by the secret influences of God's Spirit on the heart, they have been raised to a faith, hope, and love which may be called a new life. They have been born again. . . . . .

"The fact is, there is a general resemblance between birth and the production of the Christian character. By both, a being is brought into a new state, and a most in-

teresting change is produced in his conduct. Here, indeed, the analogy stops. The difference between the two changes which are here compared proves that the mode and circumstances of their production must be very different. Scripture and experience lead us to believe that the change which makes a man a Christian is *gradual, progressive.* The Scriptures are very far from speaking of regeneration and conversion in the language of human systems, as effects which take place in a moment. On the contrary, regeneration and conversion are spoken of as if they were taking place through the whole of life. The Christian is continually experiencing the change which is expressed by these and similar terms. . . . . .

" I consider that experience as well as Scripture proves the gradual production of the change of heart, or the new birth. Our observation will teach us that great changes are not often suddenly produced in the human character. There are, indeed, instances of men who are suddenly stopped in a career of sin, and seem almost in a moment to turn back and retrace their steps. But religion is generally introduced and formed in us by a gentler operation. Where religious instruction has been given in early years, there is always some conviction of duty to God, some sensibility to sin, some uneasiness at neglect of religion, some vague purpose of improvement. This seems to be the first stage of the religious character; and some never pass beyond this, beyond a feeble and deceitful purpose of being better. Others, as they advance, have their attention in various methods drawn to religion and a future life. Perhaps some gross sin, into which they are hurried, startles their consciences, and forces on them the thought of their exposure to God's dreadful displeasure. Perhaps some religious companion, or good example, wins their affections, impresses them with the loveliness and importance of Christian virtue, and shows them by contrast their own miserable deficiency. Perhaps some affliction throws a gloom over the present state, leads them to consider the emptiness of the world and the need of Divine support, and directs their dejected minds to that gospel which is the only comforter of human woe. Perhaps sudden, unexpected blessings recal powerfully to them their heavenly Benefactor, and fasten on them a painful sense of their ingratitude. Perhaps an alarming providence, dangerous sickness, the near approach of death,

appals, compels them to look into eternity, and to feel the necessity of preparation for another life. Perhaps a serious discourse arrests their thoughts, and convinces them that the concerns of their souls are too weighty to be trifled with. By these and other means, their attention is awakened to religion. Attention produces solicitude; for none can think seriously on the subject without feeling that they have sins to be forsaken, to be forgiven. This solicitude produces prayer; and prayer obtains the aid and influence of our merciful Father in heaven. The Scriptures are read with new seriousness, interest, self-application. The mediation and promises of Jesus Christ are embraced with new gratitude and hope. His example appears more amiable, excellent, worthy of imitation and obedience; gross sins are forsaken; irregular desires are checked; gradually the deliberate purpose is formed of following him; and at length this becomes the strongest and most settled purpose of the soul.

"This may be considered as an outline of the general method of regeneration. I am sensible that there is a great variety in the paths by which men are brought to God. No two minds resemble each other in all their feelings. The religious history of every man is in some measure his own, peculiar to himself. The experience of each is influenced by his education, his companions, the kind of instruction he hears, and by his natural temperament. The timid mind is awakened by the terrors of the Lord; the tender and affectionate is drawn by his mercies. But amidst this great variety, the multitude of Christians agree in this, that they can point to no particular moment when a change was wrought in their hearts. Their religion has grown up by degrees, very often as silently and imperceptibly as the tree —to which it is compared—sends forth its roots and branches."

1810. Love of God. "The love of God which the Scriptures call us to cherish, and which we are formed to attain and enjoy, is not a blind, irrational sentiment. It is founded on the clearest views of the understanding, on the abundant evidence we possess, that there is an Infinite Being, in whom reside wisdom, and power, and goodness, without beginning, or end, or any limit; who sustains to us the near and tender relation of Creator, Father, Benefactor, and Lord; whose commands are equitable and kind; and who is willing to pardon our offences on the terms of re-

pentance. It is the offering of the heart to this best of beings; it venerates his majesty, esteems and adores his excellence, is grateful for his goodness, rejoices in his felicity and in the felicity of his creation, implores his forgiveness, resigns itself to his providence, and desires to do his will; and is this an affection to be decried and renounced? In the love of God are united the most delightful affections we exercise towards our fellow-beings,—filial love, thankfulness to benefactors, reverence for the great and good, sympathy with the happy, and universal goodwill. These pure affections all meet in the love of God; and are refined, exalted, and rendered sources of inconceivably high delight, in consequence of the infinite amiableness and superiority of the Being whom we love.

"Do not confound this love with the ravings of enthusiasm. It is a calm, mild, reverential sentiment, improving the understanding, subduing the passions, giving serenity to affliction, and uniformity to the whole character and life. Do not confound it with a morose, churlish, and censorious bigotry. It is a happy, cheerful principle; accepting blessings with a gratitude which improves them, delighting in all God's works, and seeing him in all, rejoicing in his providence, and hoping immortality from his mercy, regarding all men as his children, and discerning with pleasure all the excellences with which he has endowed them. Can that heart be gloomy, which adores and loves the infinitely wise and merciful God, and views him as a father—which associates him with all its joys and pains, with all the works of nature, and all the changes of life—which feels him near in danger and in death, and which hopes from his mercy a blessed immortality? No! It is not the love of God which sheds gloom and despair, but a very different principle. True love of God illuminates the darkness of the present life, and is a foretaste of the felicity of heaven."

1808. THE HAPPINESS OF BEING LOVED BY GOD. "In considering the great happiness of possessing the divine favour, I first observe that they who love God, must derive an inexpressible joy from the mere consciousness that they are beloved by such a Being, without regard to the benefits which flow from this favour.

"The Christian views God as the best, the most lovely, the most venerable of all beings. He sees, that to this glorious Being he and all things owe their existence; that the universe

is full of God; and that all happiness, from the rapture of archangels, down to the faintest pleasures of animal life, is his unmerited and constant gift. With these exalted, delightful views of God, how full of joy is the conviction of the Christian, that this God looks on him with complacency and approbation! His heart is softened by the condescension of the infinite Deity, who notices with pleasure his feeble attempts to serve and to imitate him. He would not resign the honour of such friendship for the empire of the universe.

"My friends, did your hearts never beat with joy, when you have seen the eye of a beloved and revered friend and benefactor fixed on you with tenderness and approbation; and can you be wholly insensible to the pleasure of him who feels the presence of God wherever he goes, and is able to say, 'The infinite Parent of the universe is my approving friend?' Can any one be so blind as not to see that here is a source of unfailing, of increasing happiness? To the real Christian, the Divine character continually becomes more and more amiable. All creation, all the events of life, tend to endear to him his God. But the more he loves God, the more he must delight in the consciousness of his favour. The more his conceptions of the Supreme Being are enlarged, the more his heart must thrill at the thought, that this Being looks on him with the tenderness of friendship. You who know not from experience the pure and joyful sensations which are here described, can you form no conception of the happiness of that man who looks round with adoring humility on the immensity of creation, on the endless variety of Divine blessings, and in the midst of his reverence and gratitude feels that the universal Parent, though encircled in his majesty, thinks of him continually, despises not his humble offering, is well pleased with his sacrifices of praise and love, and bears towards him an increasing, an unbounded affection? Are you so debased, as to prefer the sordid pleasures of sense, of the world, to a happiness so rational, so sublime! Can you consent to live without this delightful conviction, that the God who made you, the best of beings, delights in you as his children and servants? . . . . .

"Is there one who is wholly insensible to the blessedness of that man who has liberty of access to God, approaches him with confidence, speaks to him as a friend, spreads before him all his wants, believes that he is heard, and knows that he shall advance continually nearer and nearer to his Father,

and be introduced to his presence in a purer world? These are the indescribable enjoyments of the man who is reconciled to God. The Christian who views God as his approving friend, needs no compulsion to bring him into the Divine presence. The thought, that God condescends to regard him with a favourable eye, swells his heart with unutterable gratitude, and gives new ardour and confidence to his devotions. He no longer worships with cold formality a distant Deity; but casts himself into the arms of an ever-present Father. He no longer shrinks from God as a being whom he has offended. He may, indeed, shed tears, but they are filial tears; he may blush, but it is from ingenuous shame, called forth by unmerited love; he feels that the Father whom he has offended has requited his guilt with infinite tenderness, and the recollection of his sins only gives a new glow and sensibility to the exercise of his devotion. What happy communion necessarily results from a consciousness of the favour of God! This consciousness disperses all those fears which haunt the guilty mind. The thought of God, which once was painful, once filled us with apprehension of judgment, now becomes our highest joy, the centre of all our thoughts, all our hopes, all our affections. We glow with new sentiments, new anticipations. We feel a new dignity in our nature, when we conceive of ourselves as being the friends of God."

1809. UNIVERSAL RECTITUDE. "This is one important mark of him who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, that he is not satisfied with a *partial rectitude:* that he proposes all the branches of holy living, and seeks to preserve a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man. He proves himself to be a sincere lover of righteousness, by choosing it without reserve and without exception. He endeavours to become acquainted with his whole duty, to enlarge his conceptions of excellence, to form a correct standard of human perfection, and he labours to bend to this all his actions and desires. He does not dwell with complacency on some constitutional propensity which looks like excellence, and flatter himself that he needs nothing more. He rather fixes his eyes on his deficiencies, and is more solicitous to supply what is wanting, than to admire what is already possessed. He does not apply himself to duties which are easy and pleasant, and rest in these as his title to the Christian character and hopes. He gives his first atten-

tion to those which are most difficult, in which he most frequently languishes, which are most opposed to his interest and ease; and judges of himself by the promptness and affection with which he does these. He has no desire to substitute one command for another, to relax any of the commands by superfluous strictness in the rest, to plead his general obedience in extenuation of particular offences, to balance his virtues against his sins, and thus to quiet himself in a broken, partial, limited observance of the laws of God. Whatever bears the stamp of Divine authority, of righteousness and goodness, he venerates and loves. It is his end to render his character a consistent, harmonious, well-proportioned whole, an assemblage of all Christian graces, in which the love of God shall be the supreme, the animating, the all-pervading principle, regulating every desire, setting just limits to every duty, and nourishing and guiding every social and useful affection."

1805. GROWTH IN HOLINESS. "True religion is not to be measured by subservience to a farther end; but is *the end of ends* itself. It is the health, purity, vigour, rectitude, of the soul; and can too much of these be possessed? Is there an unattainable degree of them which we should not desire and pursue? Can God, the infinite fountain of good,—whose glory creation reflects, and before whom creation is as nothing,—can he be too much loved, revered, or praised? Can we ever render him all the honour which is his due? Shall we ever embrace his whole character and government, and have reason to restrain our views and affections, for want of new excellence to behold and admire? . . . . .

"Let us feel that the authority and excellence of God claim all our hearts, all which we now are, all which we can be; that it is the glory of the hosts of heaven to be conformed to his image and his law; that we can approach those higher orders only by growing in piety and goodness; that religion is the excellence of the intellectual nature in all its varieties and degrees; that this is the only true improvement of our nature, and that we can never rise too high; that according to our growth in these will be our rank in the scale of existence; and, in a word, that by these alone we approach God and prove ourselves his children. . . . . .

"Religion is the rectification of the soul; it is inward health; it is the direction of affection to the most interesting objects. It consists of feelings and dispositions which in-

clude everything generous, disinterested, sympathetic, and pure. It is in its very nature peace. . . . .

"If, indeed, there were narrow limits to the Divine nature and perfection, and scanty happiness to be promoted in his system, then the joy of extended piety and goodness might be changed into sorrow, at the discovery of the imperfection and narrowness of the objects. But the infinity of God and of his designs and government is an assurance that the most fervent affections shall not be disappointed. His character invites the warmest friendship, the most exalted complacency and esteem. His condescension encourages unbounded confidence. His goodness animates unbounded hope. . . . . .

"What an argument is it for growth in religion, that by it we shall be raised to angelic purity and happiness? What a commendation is it of that excellence which the Christian is called to cultivate, that heaven holds nothing more precious,—that heaven consists only in superior degrees of this excellence of soul!"

1805. SIGNS OF GROWTH. "We are not growing in religion, if we make piety a substitute for kindness, or kindness a substitute for piety; if we hope by generosity to atone for extravagance or lust, or by honesty to atone for avarice. We are not growing in religion, if we are satisfied with performing occasional acts which suggest themselves to our minds, but make no exertion to learn how we may pursue the whole will of God. We are not growing in religion, if the thought of living habitually in any omission or any positive disobedience sits easy upon us, and makes no painful impression. If, on the contrary, our consciences testify that God's goodness and majesty excite us to seek *universal obedience;* if in our hearts we feel that every branch of known duty is the object of our attention and pursuit; if we can hope that not one sin of heart or life is habitually allowed and knowingly indulged,—then we may expect to grow in all excellence. Then the various duties which we seek to perform will confirm one another. Our temperance will invigorate our love, and this our piety, and piety will add stability to both. In a life in which all duties meet, there is a harmony which is favourable to all. One spirit circulates through all. They grow like the limbs of a well-proportioned body. . . . .

"When our duty and our happiness shall entirely coincide, then we shall be perfect beings; and in proportion as we approach this state, we approach perfection. . . . . .

"When one is growing in religion, in excellence, he converts more and more the common pursuits of life into means of piety and goodness, and makes them the way to heaven. The spiritual temper gives more and more its own colour to all objects, and influences every choice of the mind. The soul becomes more and more impregnated with piety and love, and sees and pursues all things under the influence of these principles. . . . . .

"If we are growing in Christian excellence, we shall become more simple in our characters. We shall be the same everywhere. The love of God and man will diffuse itself more and more through our common looks and words, emotions and actions. We shall feel this temper at home and abroad. It will influence us when no eye sees us, as well as when we are excited by numbers. It will lead us peculiarly to secret, unobserved performance of duty, to habitual acts of kindness and devotion which lie beyond the notice of man. We shall not only be more serene in provocation, more cheerful in affliction, more moderate in prosperity, but everything will take a hue from religion, and lead to the exercise of pious, humble, disinterested affections. . . . . .

"If we are growing in religion, we shall make advance to this *simplicity* of heart, this harmonious, tranquil state of mind. We shall act more from *one principle*, act more and more for *one end;* and hence our feelings and actions will be more consistent, uniform; the colour of our souls and lives will become more single; and we shall exhibit one form to the world and to our own consciences."

1804. HARMONY OF HOLINESS. "As no holy temper can exist in separation from any branch of moral excellence, it follows that particular actions are to be approved only when they evince a general conformity of heart to the law of God. There is a beauty in real religion. All its sentiments and views and desires are harmonious; all its actions are guided by one light, and animated by one spirit. It is founded on the crucifixion of selfish affections, and it flows out in good-will to God and man, and in complacent regard to all excellence in heaven and in earth. It has no desire to avoid particular duties, for its happiness springs from the simplicity and consistency of its principles and pursuits; and its serenity would be destroyed by the counteraction of holy and sinful dispositions.

"If, my friends, you are animated by real religion, it will appear in the beautiful and harmonious exercise of all holy dispositions. You will possess a principle of devotion and of impartial benevolence, which will eradicate the debasing and enfeebling lusts and passions of your souls; which will dispose you to blend your interests with those of other beings; which will unite you with the universe, and flow out in tenderness to man, and submission to God. Trust not in any single virtue. If your religion be genuine, it will draw in its train the whole of moral excellence. Search, then, whether in all respects you are conformed to the law of God."

1805. FUTURE REWARDS OF USEFULNESS. "One great end of the Deity in forming such an extensive connexion and dependence in his system undoubtedly is, that he may give room to the benevolent exertions of his children. He peculiarly delights in communicating happiness through the good exertions of his creatures. He has so constituted the universe, that its happiness flows from the co-operation of its various parts, from benevolent reciprocation, and the mutual dispensing of blessings. God, therefore, may be considered as governing, not so much to impart good immediately, as to bless the good exertions of the benevolent. Hence we see that every benevolent deed will produce by its success peace and joy to the heart from which it flows; for there is One infinitely wise and powerful, who has taken upon himself the care of advancing every labour of love; the good heart, therefore, will for ever be called to rejoice in the happiness which it has produced.

"Why may we not suppose that the blessedness which will be enjoyed in the heavenly world will be the result of the joint exertion of all good beings; and that each will have the felicity of knowing that by his humble labours the blessings of God have contributed to this abundant increase? In the present state, indeed, we see but little of the consequences of actions. Often the benevolent seem to labour in vain; seldom do they witness a harvest proportioned to their desires; and hence they are in danger of fainting in well-doing. But the scene which now meets our eyes is narrow in comparison with the mighty system of God. We know not the modes in which he operates. We cannot take in the innumerable ways in which he makes the labours of the good conducive to the end they propose. At the great consummation of all

things, the darkness will be dissipated, and the good will reap. *Then* they will see their prayers, their toils, their liberal contributions, their exhortations, all their various exertions for the interests of men, and for the kingdom of the Redeemer, improved by infinite wisdom to accomplish the happiest ends. They will see that their good works failed to accomplish the object they desired, only that they might conduce to greater good. They will see happiness existing and destined to exist and to increase for ever, which they were the honoured instruments of promoting. They will be hailed by some grateful voice, ascribing to their prayers and exertions the attainment of heavenly blessedness. They will see the connexion of their labours with the prosperity and triumphs of the kingdom of God. And joy will fill their hearts at finding that they have not lived in vain,—that while, perhaps, they have laboured in stations too humble for the notice of man, they have been workers together with God, and been permitted to lay the foundation of felicity which shall never end. . . . . .

"True benevolence is not happy in itself; it is happy in the felicity of other beings; and in proportion to its strength we shall ardently desire to attain to a state of existence in which we may behold and promote the highest good, may grow in goodness, become members of an active society warmed with purest benevolence, and be entirely devoted to the designs of the merciful God. The prospect of eternal life must be inconceivably more dear to a benevolent heart than to any other being, because this heart is fixed on an object so glorious and extensive, that it wants an eternity to enjoy and pursue it. Take away the rewards of the gospel from the benevolent soul, let him see no spheres of usefulness beyond the grave, let him see all his labours confined to the narrow sphere of this changing world, and his heart will sink and grow cold. There will be no object large enough for him to embrace. The good heart naturally allies itself with eternity. It is its nature to expand its views. Let it behold a kingdom of endless and increasing glory under the government of infinite love, and let it be invited to press forward to this kingdom, and its benevolence will give it vigour to pursue the prize.

"It is true, indeed, that if the common conceptions of the world respecting the rewards of the gospel were just, the benevolent heart could not pursue them. Men make a

heaven of pleasures in no respect congenial to the heart of benevolence. A good man can be quickened only by the prospect of a future world in which goodness will be exercised and displayed. Jesus will reward his followers, not by introducing them to a paradise of sensual delight and to bowers of undisturbed repose; but by enlarging their faculties, shedding new light into their minds, and welcoming them to a state where every excellence will be confirmed,—where they will behold God as a friend face to face, and approach the Divine majesty with new affection,—where they will accomplish the Divine purposes with increasing vigour, delight, and success, and receive and communicate more happiness in an hour or a day than they have done in the whole of their lives on earth. Here is an object worth ambition. Here is an immortality the thought of which should kindle every hope and desire, and quicken to the practice of universal piety."

1810. MAN'S SPIRITUAL PERFECTION THE END OF PROVIDENCE. "By these obvious remarks we are led to the very important truth, that Providence has a principal regard to the mind of man, that divine principle by which man is distinguished above all the other inhabitants of the earth, and is rendered so capable of progression in truth, virtue, and happiness. To the Infinite Mind nothing can be so dear as *mind*. There is nothing over which he must watch with such affection. To a wise and good Creator no object can be so important as souls capable of goodness and wisdom; and to form, expand, enlighten, purify, invigorate, and bless these souls must be the great end of his administration. The perfection of mind, or of intelligent creation, is the great end of God.

"Do you ask in what this perfection consists? I answer, in *knowledge*, in *love*, and in *activity*. That mind which has a wide range of thought, knows much of God and of his creation, and loves what it knows,—which is bound by a strong affection to its Creator and its fellow-beings, and acts as well as loves,—which puts forth all its powers, employs all its knowledge, in the service of God, and in blessing his creatures,—that mind is a perfect mind; and it is as happy as it is perfect. Its happiness partakes of the purity and serenity of the Divine felicity. Now this I conceive is the end of God, to bring his rational offspring to this perfect and blessed state, to give them the widest, clearest, and brightest

views, to give them the strongest, purest, most disinterested love, and to form them to the most vigorous and efficient exertion of all their powers in the promotion of the best designs."

SECTION SECOND.

HUMAN NATURE.

1811. PRINCIPLE OF RELIGION IN HUMAN NATURE. "We have not merely capacities of attaining just ideas of God; there is a foundation in our nature for feeling and loving, as well as discerning, his character. Let us dwell on this point. In human nature there is a sensibility to what is great and good. There is no man whose heart has not sometimes been moved, when he has heard of illustrious deeds, of pure, exalted, disinterested goodness, of an enlarged and vigorous mind employed in vast and noble designs. Now this moral sensibility is a preparative for the love of God, an impulse towards him, and evidently designed to be a bond of union between him and the human heart. In his character alone can this love of excellence find an adequate object and full gratification. We represent to ourselves higher excellencies than we discern in the best around us, and want a purer and more disinterested friend than earth can give. God is the only being without stain or blemish, without excess or defect. He is unerring wisdom, unsullied purity, unfailing faithfulness, impartial rectitude, and unbounded, unwearied, all-ennobling, universal goodness. Are we so constituted, that these qualities, when dimly seen in imperfect man, impress the heart, and shall we not direct our minds and hearts to this Being, in whom they are concentred in infinite perfection, and shine with unclouded splendour?

"This sensibility to excellence should be cherished by us, and employed to unite us to God. Have you ever felt the heart glow, whilst you have contemplated the true and good? Then you will acknowledge that this is one of the happiest, most improving, and ennobling sentiments of which we are capable. We not only enjoy, but catch the excellence we admire. That mind which is often directed towards the best of beings will not only possess a happiness peculiarly pure and refined; it will approach the goodness it loves, it will catch a ray of the celestial glory, it will be changed into the same image. God cannot enter the heart without leaving

traces of himself. It might seem presumptuous to speak of man as being a partaker of the Divine nature, did not Scripture employ this bold and elevated language. But this is really the happiness of him who contemplates God in his venerable and amiable perfections, until he is warmed with love. Why, then, do we not love God? . . . . .

"God is, in the strictest propriety of language, our Father. What is the love of God, then, but a refined filial affection? And this is an affection which we drew in with our first breath, and which was implanted at the very dawn of our being. From this view of love to God, we may see that the foundation of it is laid, that the heart is in a degree prepared for it, by the earliest feelings. We were learning this duty as soon as we began to learn anything. This bond of union with God was formed in our cradle; why, then, do we not follow this indication of the end for which we were formed? Why do we not lift up our hearts to our Heavenly Father? Does not the sentiment of filial reverence and love towards such a parent approve itself to our minds, our consciences, as reasonable, becoming, fair, and lovely? Is man ever more ennobled than when he feels his high and near relation as a child of the infinite God? . . . . .

"Let me mention one other principle of our nature which forms a foundation of the love of God, and marks us out as designed for piety. I refer to that sense of the insufficiency of worldly enjoyments, to that thirst for higher happiness than the world can give us, which I trust all who hear me have felt and can understand. There is an unsatiableness in human desires. Look where we will among our fellow-beings, and we can hardly avoid seeing that there is disproportion between the capacious mind of man and the sources of enjoyment by which he is surrounded. Our wants, instead of being satisfied, grow with possession. We imagine that this and another object will fill our minds and wishes. We obtain it, and are still hungering and discontented as before. The first moment of success and gratification may inspire transport, but we soon feel that the good we have sought is insufficient. It leaves a void. Perhaps it only inflames desire, and makes us more restless than before. With an ardent thirst for happiness, for increasing, permanent, and even endless happiness, we are placed in a world where nothing fills the mind, where the brightest prospects are soon darkened, and where the thick gloom of approaching

death hangs over every path. In such a state the heart feels the want of something which the world cannot give,—it wants an unchangeable being of boundless perfection, on whom it may repose, and in whom it may find excellence wide enough for its ever-enlarging capacities."

1810. SPIRITUAL THIRST, ASPIRATION. "Have you not felt that you possess a nature far exalted above the brutes, souls infinitely superior to your bodies, souls which ally you to higher orders of being,—that you are capable of knowledge, of goodness, of virtuous friendship, of intercourse with heaven? and has not an inward voice admonished you that you were made for this felicity, and has not this felicity excited some thirst? some earnest desire? Have you never felt that this intellectual nature admits of endless improvement,—that whilst the body grows for a few years, and to a limited extent, the soul has no bounds,—that you may enlarge your being, leave your present selves behind, and take a new rank in creation? Have you never lifted an aspiring eye to the eminence which has thus invited you, and been pained and humbled by your sloth, your low, earthly views, your reluctance to become what you might be, what you were made to be? and have you not, for the moment at least, spurned the bondage of your passions, and resolved to press forward to the excellence and liberty of children of God? Have not objects of a noble character, generous and useful pursuits, sometimes presented themselves to you, and brought with them the consciousness, that he alone is happy and excellent who gives himself up to them? and have you not blushed at the recollection of the narrow and trifling objects which have filled your minds and wasted your time? and have you not wished to live for something wider, for ends which embrace the best interests of others as well as your own? Has the thought of the great, good, and perfect God never come home to you with force? and have you never felt that he is the most worthy object of your hearts, that in forsaking him you are wretched and guilty, that there is no happiness to be compared with loving him, and enjoying his love and presence? and have you not felt some pain at your distance from him, some desire to return to your Father, some thirst after the knowledge and favour of this best of beings? Have you not sometimes heard of distinguished excellence in beings of your own race, of men in whom the glory of humanity has broken forth, whose fervent piety,

whose patient endurance of calamity, whose generous self-denial, whose perseverance in duty, have almost taken them out of the order of beings to whom they belong? and has not this heavenly excellence touched some kindred chord within you, kindled some warmth, excited you almost to rapture? Have you not done homage to holiness and virtue, felt that they are worth more than the riches and baubles of the world? Have you not sighed after the excellence you admire, and wished to be the object of that complacency, approbation, and love which this excellence always excites in ingenuous minds? Have you never looked into your own hearts, and shed tears over the ruin which you there beheld, over your disordered passions, your prejudices, your errors, your ingratitude towards God, your injustice and insensibility towards men? and have you not thirsted after deliverance from sin, after a better state, after that perfection, the idea of which has not been obliterated by human apostasy, and the hope of which is one of the first and most powerful impulses towards the renovation of our nature?"

1807. MORBID SENSIBILITY. "When God is banished from our habitual reflections, we lose the only ground of consistent conduct, and fall easy victims to temptations and delusions. . . . . .

"Some men possess a delicacy of taste, and a sensibility of soul, which render them uneasy and dissatisfied with the grossness of animal pleasures. But instead of elevating their views to a spiritual state, they employ imagination in refining away the impurities and removing the imperfections of worldly enjoyment, and intoxicate themselves with airy dreams of unalloyed felicity. Roses without thorns, streams ever clear, seas ever smooth, skies ever blue and serene, love ever warm, hope ever new and gratified, applause without envy, profusion without labour, and undisturbed retirement in the sequestered cottage and peaceful valley,—these are the stuff of which their baseless fabrics are composed. This wildness of imagination is one of the greatest dangers which beset unexperienced youth. Satan appears as an angel of light, when he guides us to these worlds of fancy. We feel a superiority to the world in ascending these airy heights, and pride ourselves in this refinement of the soul. But nothing is more ruinous. We learn to loathe the common pleasures and duties of our present existence. After arraying ourselves in robes of honour, we cannot take the low seat

which Christianity assigns us, and humble ourselves in sackcloth and ashes. After relieving worlds with our bounty, we cannot content ourselves with the little offices of kindness which form the principal exercise of our benevolence. After associating with congenial spirits and exalted minds, we find the common sense of the world insipid, and its common forms cold and repulsive. Thus this diseased sensibility alienates us from our fellow-men, and unfits us for useful exertion. . . . .

"Others waste thought, not in delineating bright prospects, but in throwing shades and darkness across the future, brooding over possible misfortunes, and cherishing irritable anxiety about events which they cannot control, and which piety would submit to the providence of God. Our Saviour says, 'Take no thought for the morrow;' but these people think of little else, and make every blessing a curse by the fear of losing it. In these various ways, the mind, instead of acquiring strength and knowledge by useful exercise, is enfeebled and intimidated; and, instead of generous fortitude and persevering patience, exhibits the imbecility of childhood and the irritableness of dotage."

1807. THE DISCIPLINE OF LIFE. "If, indeed, God designed to give as much ease and rest to rational beings as possible,—if this were the happiest state,—we might wonder at many vicissitudes which we behold. But God has the better end in view, of training up the mind to attention, observation, perseverance, and efficiency; and in this view all those changes are good which disturb our indolence, which compel us to look forward and to form and execute long and laborious plans. Even danger is sometimes the best state for the individual. Apprehensions of great evil may be necessary excitements. This is not mere speculation. We everywhere see the happy influence of the difficulties, exigencies, hardships, and even dangers of life. We see minds, if I may so speak, of a stronger texture formed by scenes of trial. Those habits of sound judgment, of calm deliberation, of steady effort, of bold, unconquerable perseverance, which we so much admire, are the effects of situations in which men feel that they have much at stake, that they are exposed to serious evils, that they must act with prudence and vigour, or they will certainly suffer."

1810. THE BLESSINGS OF HARDSHIP.—"Let none consider this state of things as severe, as reflecting on the goodness of the Creator. The difficulties of our state are among

its best blessings. The distance at which good objects are placed, and the obstacles which intervene, are the means by which Providence rouses, quickens, invigorates, expands, all our powers. These form the school in which our minds and hearts are trained. Difficulty and hardship bind us more closely to objects. We love more ardently what we have suffered to attain, and enjoy nothing so exquisitely as what we have pursued through calamity and danger. It is in such pursuits, when we endure and labour for ends which conscience and religion enjoin, that our whole nature is called forth and perfected. The heart gains new ardour, the understanding new clearness and vigour. A delightful consciousness of rectitude sustains us even if we fail, and gives a rapture to success. Especially if the ends for which we toil and suffer are of a benevolent character, do we receive a reward which swallows up our sacrifices and pains. The virtuous friendships which grow out of such labours, the glow of affection with which we are embraced by the good and holy, the consciousness of acting in union with Jesus Christ, and the excellent of all ages and all worlds, the sympathy, and approbation, and love which we excite, are indeed luxuries of the heart which cannot be too dearly purchased. Never does conscience speak to us in such cheering tones; never does our Heavenly Father look on us with such approbation; never are we so dear to those whose love it is indeed an honour and privilege to enjoy; never does our nature seem so exalted, so worthy of its Author, so worthy of immortality, as when we devote ourselves to the best interests of our fellow-beings, and, undismayed by danger, unseduced by pleasure, unwearied by hardship, unprovoked by contempt, and reposing a humble confidence in God, the originator and rewarder of all good exertions, press forward with every power to the holy end we have proposed. Who, then, will repine at the hardships of a good life? These prove, refine, and exalt the human character. Ease, indulgence, luxury, sloth, are the sources of misery. They benumb the mind, quench the warm emotions of the heart, sever man from his Creator and his fellow, and make him a poor, sordid, selfish, wretched being."

1810. BLESSINGS OF PROGRESS. "There is a happiness in progress, in anticipation, in activity, which no man, I think, would exchange for a quiet, unchanging, unimproving felicity. There is an unspeakable delight in rising, in having

something in view better than our present state, in the animation of hope, in the eagerness of pursuit, in the consciousness of having gained our elevation by our own labour; and all this happiness would be wholly lost, were we created in a state of the greatest possible elevation. Were the inconsiderate wishes of men granted, they would place themselves in a condition which would deprive them of some of the best enjoyments of humanity. They would leave in the divine system none of those excitements to which we owe the vigour of our minds and the warmth of our hearts. They would crowd into the present all future good."

1811. DUTY OF SEEKING TRUTH. "It is the great excellence of man, that he is capable of knowledge,—that he not only receives impressions from outward things, but can compare and combine what he sees, can learn the properties, causes, and influences of surrounding objects, can discern the future in the present, and rise from visible nature to its invisible Author. He is formed for the acquisition and application of truth; and his happiness and excellence very much depend on the truths he perceives. A mind which is open to truth, which sees things as they are, which forms right judgments of its own duties and condition, and of the character and rights of all with whom it is connected, is immeasurably exalted above the narrow, dark, confused, intellect, which sees everything as through a mist, gives to everything the colour of its own feelings, confines itself to what coincides with its wishes, contents itself with superficial views, and thus perpetually falls into errors and misapprehensions. . . . . .

"It is sometimes asserted, that belief, assent, or judgment is beyond our control, that we cannot think as we please, that we are necessarily swayed by evidence, and that therefore we cannot be accountable for the decisions of understanding. It is true that the understanding is obliged to conform to the evidence which it distinctly discerns. If I distinctly perceive in my neighbour the undoubted marks of a certain character, I must ascribe to him this character, however I may wish to reverse the judgment. When evidence is brought fully before the mind, and forced on its attention, belief or opinion does become a necessary result. It is no longer subjected to our power; and there is nothing morally good or evil in convictions which are thus irresistibly formed.

"But it is comparatively rare that the mind is subjected

to this compulsion. Generally speaking, evidence is not forced on the attention. It is placed within reach, but not so near that we are obliged to see it. On the contrary, a voluntary effort is generally required to bring to view the arguments which support or oppose an opinion on which we are called to decide. The operations of our minds are left very much to our own control. We cannot, indeed, judge in opposition to the evidence we see; but then it depends on ourselves whether we will see the evidence which is placed before us. If we please, we can shut our eyes upon it. We can overlook proofs which we do not wish to feel. We can select particular views of a subject, and dwell on them to the exclusion of all the rest. And in this way we may bring ourselves to believe almost anything we please. The present life has been often and justly represented as a state of trial; and it seems peculiarly designed to try the fairness and honesty of our minds. Truth is not hidden from us by an impenetrable veil. We may discern it, if we please; but it does not present itself in so definite a form and so clear a light, that we cannot but discern it. . . . . .

"These observations on the common guilt of voluntary error teach us the great importance of cherishing fairness and honesty of mind, a supreme love of truth, and a determination to follow it wherever it may lead, or whatever sacrifices it may require. This temper I would most earnestly recommend to you, as the happiest and noblest temper, as the great duty of a rational being, and as indispensable to a consistent, useful, self-approving, and respected life. . . . . .

"Am I asked in what this honesty of mind consists, or what is included in it? I answer,—would we be honest, we must fill ourselves with a deep sense of the *infinite value of truth*, with a desire to see everything as it is, to form a right judgment on every subject; and we must labour that this desire may exceed in strength all those passions which so often darken and blind the understanding. A supreme love of truth, a disposition to make all sacrifices to it, and to follow it, though it lead to contempt, loss, and danger,—this is the very essence of honesty of mind; and where this exists, it will induce impartial and serious inquiry.

"Our honesty of mind bears an exact proportion to the patience, steadiness, and resolution with which we *inquire*. When an opinion is proposed to us which does not agree

with our past conceptions, we must not reject it as soon as proposed, and, to save ourselves the trouble of inquiring and the shame of retracting, say that on this point we have made up our mind; but, on the contrary, under a sense of fallibility, we must be willing to review our opinions, to examine afresh their foundations, and to receive any new light which our opponent may throw on the subject. We must be very careful, too, not to enter on the discussion with a previous determination to form only one opinion. This is the case with many. They profess to be willing to inquire; and yet they are fully satisfied, before they begin, as to the point at which they will stop. But this is only a mockery of examination; and we may as well spare ourselves all trouble, and hold fast our present opinions without pretending to sift them. Our duty is to enter on the consideration of every subject with a sincere desire to learn the truth, and to renounce whatever errors we may have imbibed. For this end, we should meet the subject fairly, look it fully, if I may say so, in the face, and give ourselves time to examine it with deliberation. We must not cast over it a glance, and from unmanly sloth pretend that we see all which can be seen, and hurry to a conclusion before we have laid a foundation for correct judgment. We must not catch at arguments which support the sentiment we approve, and say these are unanswerable, and refuse to look further. We are very apt to shut our eyes, under pretence that there is nothing to be seen, at the very moment that new light is breaking in upon us. Unhappily, this new light detects old errors, and therefore it is that we eagerly exclude it. Instead of this partial view, we must labour to attain as full and comprehensive a knowledge of the subject as possible. We must invite evidence from all quarters, open our ears to all that can be urged on both sides, and give attention to every argument proportioned to its importance. In this especially consists an honest inquiry for the truth. All our passions and prejudices incline us to hear only one party. Would we be honest, we must extend our views, and weigh with seriousness what is urged in favour of opinions we dislike. We too easily take it for granted that an opponent has nothing to urge in his favour. Let us first hear, and then decide.

"After this dispassionate attention to all the evidence within our reach, the time for *judging* has come. Perhaps our inquiries have left us in a state of doubt on subjects

where before we were confident. In this case we must be careful not to express a stronger belief of a sentiment than we really feel. Perhaps it will be expected that we shall use the language of decision. But our language should ever be the faithful expression of our conviction. When we affect greater confidence in a sentiment than we possess, we become interested in bringing our mind into this state of confidence, and shall almost inevitably be led to practise imposition on ourselves, as well as on others. Perhaps, in consequence of this inquiry, we shall come to a decision, but to a very different decision from what others wish and expect. This is a trying condition; but we must show our sense of the sacredness of truth by steadfastly adhering to it, wherever we are called to express our sentiments. Nothing should tempt us to belie the convictions of our minds. It is better to be forsaken and renounced by men, than to seek their friendship by affecting compliance with what seem to us errors. We are not called to be forward, rude, intemperate, in expressing our sentiments. We ought to be prudent; but Christian prudence is never to be separated from Christian simplicity and sincerity. When called to act, we should uniformly espouse what we deem to be truth, and in this cause should be willing to suffer. . . . . .

" This is honesty of mind,—a most noble spirit,—the distinction of a truly good and great man. It is a quality of character without which the most splendid talents are of little avail; for then intellectual vigour may prove a curse, and may only help to plunge us deeper into error. This fairness of mind is not a very showy virtue, especially when it is exercised in the common concerns of life; but perhaps it includes more magnanimity, courage, and self-denial than any other virtue. Multitudes have dared to face death in the field of battle, who have yet wanted strength and spirit to oppose their own and others' prejudices. . . . . .

" This virtue will especially give inward peace. The man of an honest mind has a consciousness of the truth of his convictions, which no other man can have. He learns to distinguish truth with an ease peculiar to himself. Truth offers herself, if I may so speak, in her native simplicity and beauty to an upright mind. . . . . .

" The fair and upright mind dwells in a region of light. Conscious of sincerity, it does not wish to hide itself from its own inspection, or from the inspection of God. It is con-

scious of his approbation, and confidently hopes, through his mercy, to be at length released from all error, and to attain pure and unclouded vision in his heavenly kingdom."

1811. THE HABIT OF MEDITATION. — "We should find ourselves far happier, even as it respects this life, were we to learn the art of *Meditation;* were we able to concentrate our powers on any subject, to exclude foreign thoughts; and, especially, could we find pleasure in applying our thoughts to worthy subjects. In this way our minds would be enriched. . . . . .

"I need not tell you the value of a sound, vigorous, discerning intellect. But the intellect acquires health and vigour by exercise, labour, close attention, patient observation. The treasures of wisdom are not to be seized with a violent hand, but to be earned by persevering labour. That solid judgment which estimates things according to their value, and points out the surest means of attaining the best ends, is the fruit of reflection on our own and others' experience. It is not the work of an hour or a day to store the mind with pleasing subjects of thought, with wide and just views, to give it a quick discernment, an habitual activity, and the power of forming extensive, judicious plans of action. None, surely, can be so mad as to expect a capacious and accurate intellect in those who live to be exhilarated, and who, for this end, give themselves up to a rapid succession of objects, who seek only scenes which promise pleasure, who place happiness in a whirl of excitement, in a light, hurried, unreflecting life, in boisterous and extravagant conversation, in bustle and show, and every method of quickening the spirits and dissipating the thoughts. . . . . .

"No means of instruction, of illumination, can be so perfect as to supersede, to render unnecessary, the exertion of our own powers. The mind must be active, in order to attain clear and influential views. There must be a love of truth, a desire to know the character and will of God, and an honest application of the understanding to this object, or we shall ever dwell in a region of darkness and shadows; our ideas on these subjects will be dim, unsteady, and uninfluential.

"It is not true that a sufficient knowledge of duty is to be gained without serious attention. Nothing is more evident than that conscience is often erroneous, often defective. This faculty, like every other, is to be improved by care and

habitual exercise. We are continually tempted to silence or seduce it.

"To attain clear and just views of our duties in their full extent, of the various virtues and excellences which belong to our nature and state, and which must combine to render the character perfect and the life truly happy, we must employ frequent reflection;—we must dwell on the precepts and life of Jesus Christ, in which all human excellences are unfolded; we must make our minds familiar with the lofty sentiments, pure principles, devout and generous affections from which the Christian is called to act; we must consider the various kinds of exertion included in each duty, the various modes in which each good disposition will express itself, the proper feelings and actions in the various circumstances amidst which we are to be placed.

"By this activity of mind on the duties of religion, we shall gradually attain a very desirable state of mind, so that we shall carry within us, as it were, a chart of Christianity. Conscience will be prepared with instruction in every condition into which we may be thrown. At every moment, the purest and best feelings and actions—such as we shall approve when we review our course—will rise to our view, and invite and attract us. This habitual activity and quickness of conscience, this power of seizing at the first glance on the best rules, on the most becoming, honourable, fit, and useful course, is most desirable, if we would live consistently and escape remorse."

1810. HUMILITY AND THE DIGNITY OF MAN. "Humility is that impartial, just, and upright state of mind in which we view ourselves as we are. Humility has sometimes been described as a disposition to deny ourselves what we have, to think worse of ourselves than we really are, to take a lower seat than belongs to us. But christianity is a religion of truth, and never calls us to practise deception on ourselves. It does not ask us to spend useless tears and regrets on sins we have never committed, or to apply to ourselves terms of degradation and reproach which we have not deserved. There is no firm foundation of religion but truth. To ascribe to ourselves imaginary imperfections and crimes is the mark of an abject and timid mind, and gives little reason to hope from us that improvement which is the great end of Christian humility.

"I wish to suggest some reflections on this leading virtue

of the gospel, in order to show you that it is perfectly consistent with elevation of sentiment, with the most encouraging and ennobling virtues of the nature which God has given us. Humility has probably suffered in the estimation of many from the exaggerated and injudicious language of those who have wished to commend it. This virtue has sometimes been represented as including contempt for everything belonging to human nature. Were this view correct, humility would deserve to lose its place among the virtues. It would generate a degraded mind, a depression of spirit, a low and sordid cast of thought and action. Humility is to be ranked amongst virtues only as far as it is founded on truth. Humility permits and requires us to view ourselves as we are, to ascribe to ourselves qualities which are suited to inspire respect and love as far as we possess them; but it requires us to stop here, to be equally sensible to our defects and sins, and to feel what is the truth,—that we have no claims on the respect and service of God and intelligent beings, compared with the claims which they have on us. This appears to me the essence of humility. We are not to be blind to any excellences we possess; but we are to feel that nothing is due to us compared with what we owe, and that it becomes us to cherish a sense of our inferiority, submission towards God, and modesty and meekness in our intercourse with other beings.

"It is a duty to estimate highly the *nature* which God has given. It should be regarded with reverence, rather than contempt. Our danger is, that we shall think of it too meanly, not too highly. We ought to think of this nature soberly, indeed, but still to attach to it a high importance. Man was formed in the image of God, and, notwithstanding the unhappy change which has taken place in his state, he has yet capabilities of excellence which show him to be a noble work of the Creator. There are yet in him powers of thought and action, a range of intellect, an ardour of feeling, a tenderness of conscience, a sensibility to what is right, which entitle man to respect. There are yet in him many indications of a being formed for the highest happiness, the happiness of wisdom, piety, and goodness. There are many testimonies, too, that man is not forsaken by his Maker. There is an indulgent providence extended over him; there is a liberality in the supply of his wants, there is a provision for the improvement of his faculties, which prove that he is

yet an interesting object in the sight of God. Yet more, we have an evidence of the most affecting kind to the value of human nature. God has given his own Son,—a being respecting whose nature, perhaps, revelation communicates no precise ideas, but whom we are yet taught to view as sustaining a peculiar relation to the infinite Father, and peculiarly beloved by him,—he has given this only-begotten Son to perform for us the kindest offices, to sustain towards us the most interesting relation,—that of saviour, friend, guide, and giver of eternal life. He has sent this beloved Son to take our nature, to become one of us, in the human form to display the virtues of heaven, and, by his promises, example, and aid, to inspire the same virtues into the hearts of mankind.

" Here is enough to attest the worth of our nature. Here we are assured that man is capable of the greatest, best, and most honourable endowments; that he can resemble God; that he is designed for immortality; that abodes in heaven are provided for his reception; that the society of that better world are ready to welcome him as a sharer of their excellence and happiness. Consider man as a favoured child of God, united by the tie of brotherhood to the Son of God, called to an immortal life, destined to endure and improve through all ages, to extend his views and affections, to fill a wider and a wider sphere, and to perform more and more noble services in the universe, through an endless existence;—and surely such a being is not to be viewed with contempt. There is something sacred in that spiritual nature which the breath of God has quickened, and which the blood of Jesus has been shed to cleanse, refine, and make for ever happy.

" These views of human nature are not only warranted by Scripture, but I think an acquaintance with our race will lead a reflecting and pious mind to cherish the same hopes. We are sometimes permitted to behold humanity in so delightful a form, adorned with such virtues, exalted by such vigour of thought and such ardour of affection, so dead to self and so alive to all other beings, so superior, yet so unassuming, exerting an influence so beneficent, cheering, consoling, so resigned and devoted to God, and so sustained by the hope of heaven, so arrayed in intellectual and moral glory, that we have, as it were, a pledge of the height which man is to attain. Humility does not check these views, but rather calls us to cherish them, to cast our eyes forward to

the glory and honour with which humanity is to be crowned, to form large and generous hopes, to burn with a strong desire for this elevated state. It is by feeding on these sentiments that the mind is expanded, fortified, and impelled to excellence. It is by this hope we are saved. This hope makes us to become what it promises."

1818. HUMAN NATURE AS GLORIFIED IN JESUS. "The incarnation of Christ should inspire joy, as it is an attestation to the great capacities and excellence of human nature when undepraved by sin. That nature, which the Divine Word assumed, must be capable of every good principle and pure affection, and must be designed to bear the image, to reflect the perfections, of God. Were man a mere creature of sense, were he susceptible of no improvement in knowledge and holiness, were he not formed to draw nearer to this great original of all excellence and happiness, it is incredible that the Son of God would ever have appeared as the Son of Man. The incarnation declares man to be an important being in the creation of God. It declares that the human soul is a germ, in which are wrapped up noble powers,—an inextinguishable flame, which will grow bright and clear with truth and goodness. It declares that the interests of man are of boundless magnitude; and it proves that these interests are not forgotten, not forsaken, by God, —that man is precious in the sight of his Creator, that his powers shall not be lost, his nature not be left in ruin, his name not blotted out of the universe. O man! has God clothed his own Son in thy nature, and does he not teach thee that thou art formed to be his son, that thy nature is one of his fairest works, and that he views thee, though fallen, with unbounded compassion? Seek, then, to fulfil the designs of thy Creator! Admit the encouraging hope of restoration to purity; and let this hope help to raise thee from thy fall! . . . . .

We have reason to rejoice that the '*Word* was made flesh,' as, in consequence of this, we are favoured with a view of human nature in a state of perfection. What a great and happy privilege! Human nature, as exhibited in every other being, as marked with imperfection and sin. Wherever we look, to whatever page of history we turn, we see human nature bearing traces of ruin. We see the glory of man obscured, his powers perverted, his understanding darkened, his conscience seared, his passions unrestrained. Even the

best men are still frail, weak, and fallen beings. What reason have we to weep and blush, when we survey ourselves or our fellow-beings! Human nature and guilt and disorder seem inseparably connected. But when we look to the incarnate Saviour, we see man as he was before the fall, man restored, raised from his ruins, man in the true glory of his nature, man such as God designed. We see all the passions tempered and harmonious, and every word and action expressive of pure love to God and to mankind. . . . . .

"If we have attained any refined and elevated sentiments on human excellence, we owe them entirely to the character of Jesus Christ. He came into the world, not with the bloody pomp of the hero, but with all meekness and mercy, breathing nothing but peace and love. He came, not wrapped in the unsocial robe of the philosopher, but easy of access, ready to instruct, stooping to the feeblest understanding, and encouraging the most imperfect goodness. He came, not offering sacrifice, with the formalist, as the essence of piety, but serving God by active goodness and purity of life. In him human nature had laid aside all its ferocity, all its pride, its unforgiving malice, its violence, its selfishness, its sensuality, its discontent, and appeared all tenderness, humility, forbearance, liberality, patience, and self-denial. It was chaste and temperate in its thoughts and desires, resigned to God, unwearied in doing good, firm without severity, ardent without passion, hating sin, and yet full of compassion for the sinner. How worthy of God does our nature appear, as it was exhibited in Jesus Christ! We see it unadorned by that outward splendour which is so often employed to cover its deformity, and yet it shines with a lustre which no outward show ever conferred. How grateful should we be that human perfection is thus placed before us,—not in description, but in *real life*,—that we are permitted to follow a perfect human being through the changes of an active career, and to learn from him the temper which we should maintain in all the vicissitudes of our present existence! The state of perfection to which man is to be raised is not an ideal one, does not merely exist in promise, is not something which is only hereafter to be known. Human nature *has already* been displayed, triumphant over all temptation, clear from every stain, glorious in love and holiness, pure as heaven, and bright with the image of God.

SECTION THIRD.

CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY.

1811. CHRIST A GIFT OF GOD'S LOVE. "There are some who are so desirous to magnify the justice of God, that they represent him as viewing our race with unmingled indignation, and speak as if his love towards man were excited, and even purchased, by the sacrifice of his Son. In this way the unthinking are led to associate the ideas of an awful justice with the Father, whilst they clothe the Son with the delightful and attractive attributes of mercy, and consider him as peculiarly the source of their deliverance. I do not say that it is the intention of any to make this impression. I only state the fact, that such impressions are produced by the unguarded language used on this subject.

"I fear that false conceptions have arisen on this subject, from the habit of speaking of our pardon and future happiness as '*purchased for us* by the death of Christ.' The effect of such language is to fix in many minds the idea that our Saviour has offered to God an equivalent,—a price for our happiness,—and thus obtained for us what would have been reluctantly bestowed, had we been left to the mercy of God. Many, indeed, do not carry this language so far; but they still feel as if forgiveness and future happiness were a *purchase*, and therefore not altogether the *gift* of free and pure benevolence. I will not say that it is improper to speak of our deliverance as purchased by Christ, because we usually speak in this manner of blessings which have been procured for us by the labour and love of other beings. But I am certain that this language never should be used, if the tendency is to weaken our convictions of the great truth, that God is moved with compassion towards us by the essential benignity of his nature; that of himself he is inclined to save our race; that his blessings flow to us from a sincere desire to bless us; and that pardon and life are free gifts,—not something paid for,—not something obtained for us from the severe justice of the Father by the compassion of the Son.

"I have said that our salvation is nowhere spoken of in Scripture as bought for us by Christ. I may err, although

I have a strong conviction, that, on careful inquiry, you will find the statement correct. Christians themselves are said to be bought, but not their salvation. Thus, Christ is said to have 'purchased the church with his own blood,' and the apostle says to the Corinthians, 'Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God.' But these passages convey a very different idea from what I have just opposed. They do not represent our blessings as purchased from God, but give us a sentiment as remote from this as possible. They teach us that God was so desirous to receive us again into his family as his servants, worshippers, and children, that he was willing to give his own Son for us, to purchase us at this inestimable price. In the language of Scripture, men, having sinned and become subject to death, are represented as *enslaved to sin* and *to death*. In this wretched and hard bondage their Heavenly Father pitied them and desired their release, desired that they might be rescued from this cruel oppression, and restored to his easy and happy service, that they might enter his family, and become his property in the sense of yielding him cheerful obedience and of enjoying his love. To effect this most happy deliverance he sent his own Son; and as the wisest, most suitable, and effectual means to this end, he gave this Son to die the bitter death of crucifixion. According to the customs of the age when the Scriptures were written, it was very common to redeem men from captivity by paying a price. The blood or death of Christ, which is the instrument of our deliverance from the captivity of sinful affections and of death, is therefore called a price, a ransom; and we are said to be bought by it. This is the plain, obvious meaning of Scripture, and so far from representing our blessings as bought for us from God by another, it represents God as buying or purchasing us, that he may shed on us his richest blessings. The mercy of God has not been excited towards us by the mediation of the Son; but his mercy preceded, appointed this mediation, and gives it its efficacy.

1812. THE LIFE OF CHRIST. "Among the truths relating to Jesus Christ, which should be preached, I have mentioned the *holiness of his life*. Let me here observe, that from the large portion of the Gospels which is taken up in relating the life and actions of our Saviour, I cannot but think that preaching should be often directed to this subject. I cannot

but think that this most delightful part of the Christian system—the *life* which Jesus led, the *character* which he expressed—has been too much overlooked. The controversies relating to the precise dignity of his person have drawn attention from the holy and heavenly spirit which is everywhere discovered in the simple history of the Evangelists. The life of Jesus, as drawn in the gospels, has been pronounced, perhaps with truth, the *strongest evidence* of his gospel, more impressive to a good mind even than the miracles. This, I think, may be affirmed with truth, that, if we would learn perfect goodness, if we wish to warm our hearts with the love of it, we can adopt no method so effectual as the study, the frequent contemplation, of the life of Jesus."

1810. CHARACTER OF CHRIST. Jesus Christ is the Son of God in a peculiar sense, the temple of the Divinity, the brightest image of his glory. In seeing him we see the Father. On this account it is delightful to contemplate him. It is delightful to think that his mildness, compassion, forbearance, and unwearied goodness, are beams, reflections, of the character of the universal Father. No other manifestation is so suited to teach us that God is love.

"It is also interesting to contemplate Jesus Christ, as in him are displayed, in the brightest forms, all the virtues and excellences of human nature. He, and he alone, is the perfect man, an unerring standard; and it is in contemplation of Jesus that we can best learn the glory for which our nature is designed, that we shall best learn to love and aspire after excellence. . . . .

"It is a kind ordination of God that the evidence of Christianity should be a growing evidence. When we begin our inquiries into the truth of Christianity, we are first impressed with the miraculous works of Christ, those exertions of divine power which prove that the Father was in him, that he was commissioned from heaven. In proportion as we attend to the subject, a new source of evidence springs up and brings new conviction to our minds. In the moral character of Jesus we see a miracle more striking than the most stupendous work of a physical nature. We see in brighter and clearer light the impressions and evidences of a sincere, upright, devout and most benevolent heart. We see a character most original and yet most consistent; such as the Evangelists could never have feigned, such as impostors would never have imagined, but which is exactly suited to

the wants and miseries of man, and to our highest conceptions of the Divinity.

"If from the contemplation of this character we are so blest as to imbibe the spirit of Jesus, our conviction of his excellence and sincerity acquires new vigour. Every attainment in purity and benevolence opens our minds to behold and enjoy yet more of the benignity and glory of the Saviour. We feel a new delight in studying his history, in tracing his life. We feel an accordance between our best and purest sentiments and the conduct and instructions of Christ, and we find these invigorated as our knowledge of his character is enlarged. We perceive ourselves growing more and more like God; we perceive our narrow and sensual hearts expanding with pure benevolence: we perceive the storms of passion calmed, and a serene hope in God, and a patient endurance of injuries taking possession of our souls. We know by an evidence which we cannot communicate to any but Christians, that Jesus is the Son of God, for we feel ourselves elevated and strengthened by his presence. . . . .

"I hope I am not insensible to the obligations of virtue and piety and benevolence, however displayed, however enforced. But never do I feel how lovely is virtue,—never do I feel so deeply my own wretchedness, unworthiness, and guilt,—never do I so earnestly desire to subdue my evil passions, and to put on humility and universal love, as when I behold the glory of God in the face, in the actions, in the words, of Jesus Christ."

1808. THE MAJESTIC CLAIMS OF JESUS. "Can we read this solemn declaration of Jesus without wonder and veneration? We now see him in a situation where everything tended to depress his mind. We see him surrounded by men who he well knew would ridicule his claims, and make them the foundation of his ruin. We see him in circumstances in which ambition and every earthly interest united to oppose the assertion of this high character. From his silence we see that at this trying moment he was perfectly composed, not agitated, not provoked, not hurried to imprudence by violence of passion, but capable of the calmest anticipation of the consequences of his acknowledgment. In this situation, when the solemnity of an oath was imposed on him, and when life or death rested on the words he uttered, we hear him breaking that silence which calumny could not interrupt, and in the most firm, serious, and majestic language

claiming the honours of the Son of God, of the promised Messiah, of the Saviour of the world. We not only hear him assenting to the question, 'Art thou the Christ?' but adding to his assent a declaration of his glory, which he must have known would have been peculiarly offensive to the Jews, and applying to himself language which, under the old dispensation, had been limited to God,—thus expressing his intimate union with the Father. If we consider the solemnity of the occasion, and the language employed by Christ, we are authorized in saying, that, if Jesus did not declare the truth, he was not merely a common deceiver, but the very worst of deceivers. But how can this be reconciled with his whole life and doctrines? and how could a man of such a character have made such a profession in circumstances which threatened nothing but humiliation and suffering?

"If we view Jesus, bound as a criminal at a human tribunal, hemmed in with malignant enemies thirsty for his blood, how can we help astonishment at the serene, dignified, sublime language in which he spoke? What marks of an elevated mind, conscious of majesty, unintimidated by the worst forms of danger, and assured of triumphs over all opposers! It cannot be said that this is the language of boasting. It was extorted from the silent sufferer by an oath. He who had heard without reply the accusations of malice, and discovered a mind free from every discordant feeling, at length lifted his eyes to his judges, and declared, 'Ye shall hereafter see me sitting at the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'"

1808. DIGNITY OF JESUS. "A few days before, he had entered this city in triumph, he had wrought miracles which extorted admiration, he had heard the shouts of a crowd welcoming him as the promised Son of David. Through this same city he now passed as a criminal in bonds, a silent sufferer, and experienced only contempt or indifference. He saw a fickle, worldly people converted into enemies, because he had refused to assume the outward glory which they expected in the Messiah. It is peculiarly hard to bear a sudden reverse of circumstances, to maintain benevolence towards men who, from selfish feelings, express attachment, and then forsake, injure, and conspire to destroy us. But Jesus wept over Jerusalem, when he foresaw its ingratitude; and even whilst its inhabitants thronged after him to extort a sentence of condemnation, he expressed no emotions of disappointment

or anger, and bore, with equal tranquillity, the malignity of rulers, and the versatility of the populace. He saw how little effect had been produced by his ministry. He saw his enemies prosecuting their designs without any of the opposition they had feared. No friends appeared to accompany and defend him. But he made no attempts to excite anew the hopes and attachment of the multitude. And he, who had so often addressed them for their own salvation, offered not one appeal to secure himself. . . . . .

"Pilate marvelled greatly. He had been accustomed to observe in prisoners a disposition to clear themselves from such aggravated charges. He saw how easily these accusations might be repelled; he was astonished at the composed, unbroken silence of the accused. This silence of Jesus expresses great dignity and conscious innocence. He knew that the occasion required no defence. A Roman governor, residing in the narrow province of Judea, needed not to be told that no insurrection had been stirred up within his jurisdiction. Pilate must have been too well acquainted with the affairs of Judea, to need that Jesus should declare that he had forbidden none to pay tribute to Cæsar. Pilate must have known the Jewish people too well to believe that they would ever have accused a man who really aimed to break the Roman yoke from their necks. It was not necessary that he should speak in order to prevent misconception in his judge; and he was therefore silent. In this position of Jesus, in this declining to use any means with the governor or populace for his safety, we see the evidences of a mind submissive to God, superior to fear, undisturbed by passion, and persuaded that its sufferings were instrumental to some important end. This conduct of Christ, especially if we consider the friendly sentiments of Pilate, was inconsistent with all the views and motives which influence selfish men. . . . . .

"In these words we see the majesty and fearless composure of Jesus. 'I cannot and will not deny that I am a king. It is my great office to declare the truth; it is by the influence of truth, that I am to reign in the hearts of men; and I cannot shrink from asserting this most important truth, that I have the power and authority of a sovereign at once to rule and to defend my people. Let not this doctrine offend. Every one who is of the truth, who loves the light, and whose mind is open to conviction, heareth and acknowledgeth this and all my doctrines.' These words, spoken at so inte-

resting and trying a period, discover to us the elevation of our Saviour in a very striking light. We see his mind unbroken by suffering. We see in him the firmest adherence to the doctrines he had formerly taught. We see in him a conscious dignity, a full conviction of the glory and power with which he was invested. He asserts his royal office, not from ostentation, not amidst a host of flatterers, but in the face of enemies; and when he made this solemn declaration, his appearance bore little conformity, indeed, to the splendour of earthly monarchs."

1813. CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST ILLUSTRATED IN HIS LAST PRAYER. "Observe in this prayer the self-possession of Jesus. Does the thought of his danger overwhelm him? He hardly seems to recur to it. His allusions to his death are only slight and distant, as if he feared to wound the tender and fearful minds of his disciples. 'Father, I come to thee. I am now to offer myself. I am no more in the world.' Such is the language in which he clothes the solemn event which was so near. Instead of being absorbed by his approaching sufferings, instead of indulging in depressing complaints, instead of appealing to the sympathy of those around him, we see his mind opening itself to the noblest views and sentiments, exerting itself with clearness and freedom, raising itself to God and heaven, and looking forward to distant ages. What marks of a pure and exalted spirit are here unfolded to us! . . . . .

"Observe next the filial trust which breathes through this prayer. Jesus had called himself the Son of God in language which had offended the Jews; but in the prospect of danger and death he still claims the same high relation. We see not a trace of that apprehension which must have oppressed a mind conscious of having urged unauthorised claims to a mission from heaven. Hear his first words:—'Father, glorify thy Son!' Can you read this prayer, and not see in every line the marks of filial trust? . . . . .

"Observe next the temper with which Jesus reviews his life. It is natural at the approach of death to look back. To a guilty mind, the past is gloomy and appalling. To a holy mind it imparts a serene satisfaction and hope. What feelings did it awaken in Jesus? Hear his language:—'Father, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. I have glorified thee on the earth.' What a mild, yet triumphant, consciousness of a holy life! . . . . .

"Observe next, the majesty which is expressed in every

part of this prayer. In what sublime language does Jesus everywhere speak of himself! Through his whole ministry he had claimed the most exalted character and titles; and is he prepared to abandon these, now that they have roused the malice of the world? . . . . .

"From whom do these lofty words proceed? From Jesus, distinguished as he was in manner by meekness and humility; from Jesus, poor, friendless, and persecuted; from Jesus, ready to sink under the bloody cruelty of his enemies. What a singular union of lowliness and majesty! With what admiration ought we to contemplate that spirit, which, in circumstances so depressed, is yet in its claims and hopes so exalted, so unsubdued! The character which Jesus here assumes of Lord and Sovereign of the whole human race, appointed by God to recover the world to piety, and to give eternal life to his obedient disciples, is one which never before had entered human imagination; it is a character more august and sublime than was ever before assumed. But this character we find the humble and devout Jesus mildly claiming, in solemn prayer, at the approach of death. Although every event conspires to throw depression on his spirits and gloom over his prospects, although contempt and infamy threaten to overwhelm his name, his spirit is unbroken, his language is unchanged; he even speaks of the dignity of his character with new solemnity and elevation of style. What testimony is here given to his sincerity and greatness! Will any say that this is the language of enthusiasm? Read again this prayer; observe the calmness which pervades it. You see no transports, no raptures. A devout, benevolent, and mild spirit breathes through this whole act of piety; and elevated as are his claims, you still see an all-pervading humility and reverence. . . . . .

"Let me next ask you to consider the benevolence of Jesus as it breaks forth in this prayer. In this view, I consider this act of devotion as peculiarly worthy of regard. It is a delightful testimony to the benignity and amiableness of his character. You will remember that he was in a few hours to die in the most ignominious manner by the hands of men. The murderous crowd were even now collecting, and thirsting for his blood. But not one mark of an inflamed or irritated mind can be found in his prayer. You hear no imprecation on his enemies. He delights to speak of himself as sent to give eternal life to men; and he desires to be exalted, that he

may communicate to the whole world the knowledge of God. The universal benevolence which this prayer expresses, has been obscured by an unhappy misinterpretation of a particular passage. Jesus, in praying for his disciples, says, 'I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me. . . . . .

"The meaning of this passage is very obvious. He was now commending his chosen disciples to the particular care and blessing of God; and to enforce his request, he says, 'I pray not, I am not praying, for the world, for men who disregard thee, but for men devoted to thy service, and on these I hope thy peculiar blessing.' That he did not mean to exclude the world from his intercession is very obvious from his whole language on the present occasion. For instance, why is he so earnest in praying that his disciples may be one, or perfectly united? He desires this, to use his own words, 'that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' The reformation of the world is, in fact, the great object which fills the mind of Jesus through this whole prayer. He, indeed, prayed particularly for his disciples; but, observe, he prayed for them as preachers of his religion to the world. He regarded them, not in their individual, but in their public character. 'As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I sent them into the world.' His great desire and prayer was, that these men, to whom his religion was to be confided, should fulfil their high trust, and by their lives and preaching fill the world with his truth. The prospect of suffering could not drive from his mind a benevolent concern for the improvement and salvation of our race. Future ages crowded on his mind. Though insulted, dishonoured, he thought only of enlightening and saving mankind. How ardent, sublime, and pure is this benevolence! You see him on the brink of suffering, but still forgetting himself, and extending his solicitude over the whole human race.

"But do not stop with observing Christ's universal benevolence. Observe, particularly, his tenderness towards his disciples. Do you here see any marks of a leader who has drawn after him followers only to swell his train, and to promote his triumphs? Is his regard withdrawn from them by the approach of personal evil? No. Never was Jesus more affectionate, more alive to their feelings and interests. In their hearing he offers up a fervent prayer, and commends them to God. On former occasions he had reproved them,

but now no complaint escapes his lips, no allusion to their imperfections. On the contrary, he speaks with satisfaction of their virtues. 'They have kept thy word;' 'they are thine, they are not of the world.' How soothing this approbation of a dying friend! This pleasure Jesus, in death, wished to leave to his mourning disciples. . . . . .

"Let me close my remarks on the character of Jesus, as expressed in this prayer, by desiring you to observe the strong, unsubdued hope, which he everywhere expresses, of the future triumphs of his religion. He was surrounded by a few trembling disciples, from whom he was soon to be severed, and who were to encounter the opposition of the world; but we hear no despondence, no doubts, no relinquishment of his great object. On the contrary, we see him anticipating a state of glory, in which he should extend the knowledge of God throughout the world; we hear him speaking with confidence of those who should believe on him in future ages, and praying for the conversion of all mankind. This energy of hope, in circumstances so depressing, marks a mind of great elevation. There is something unspeakably sublime in the spirit of Jesus, sinking as he was into the grave, and yet looking forward with a serene, unshaken confidence to the triumphs of his religion in all succeeding time. Whence this hope, and whence its accomplishment?"

1812. SINCERITY OF JESUS, AS ILLUSTRATED IN HIS DEATH. "Let me first ask you, my friends, to observe the testimony which the last actions and words of Jesus bear to his mission from heaven, to the truth of his claims, to the Divine origin of his religion. How irreconcileable with deceit is the prayer with which he resigns his spirit, and how expressive is it of a heart conscious of its innocence—how accordant with the character of the Son of God! Jesus was at this moment exhausted by acute sufferings, which he felt were immediately to end in death. His enemies were surrounding him in triumph, exulting over him as a fallen impostor. Had he been what his enemies believed, can you imagine a condition more wretched, more suited to crush his fainting spirit? Scourged, mocked at, branded as a malefactor, driven from life with execration, he must have abandoned every hope from this world; and had the aspersions of his enemies been true, what could he have hoped in the future world? It is with pain that I make even this supposition. Had it been true, how full of horrors, how peculiarly destitute of comfort and

hope, must have been his death on the cross? But do we see in Jesus one mark of a mind conscious of having spoken without authority in the name of God? Does he mourn over his blasted hopes, his disappointed schemes? Do we discover fear, despondence? Does he speak like one who was ready to be torn from every object for which he had lived, like one who felt in suffering a just reward for crime? Hear the last words which break from his dying lips:—'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' Is this the language of defeated imposture; or is it that of the Son of God returning to his Father? . . . . .

"With what unconquerable firmness Jesus adhered to his claims! Through all his sufferings,—sufferings which combined every circumstance to shake his resolute soul,—sufferings which he did nothing to avert and nothing to mitigate,—he held fast to the profession, that he was the Son of God; and his last breath bore this claim to heaven. Whence this firmness, when nothing but death was its reward? whence could it have originated, but in the consciousness of truth? . . . . .

"It deserves to be remarked, that this assertion of his claims was addressed by Jesus, not to the multitude, but to God himself. It was in prayer that he bore his dying testimony to his union with the Father; and if this testimony was not true, can you conceive of impiety more aggravated than that with which the life of Jesus was closed? And this awful impiety had no motive;—and it closed a life of unspotted purity! Who for a moment can admit the thought? . . . . .

"What mark of deranged imagination do we discover? With what patience, composure, serenity, does he suffer! You hear no bursts of passion, no extravagance of language; and if you listen to his last prayer, what a mild, tranquil confidence does it express! Here is no boasting, rapture, transport. We see a gentle spirit resigning itself to its Father:—'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' There is a sublime composure in this death of Jesus, which I feel, but I cannot express. This is indeed the Son of God. . . . . .

"He is as great in death, as when his word revived the dead; as great as when multitudes hung in silent attention on his lips. Approach and see. His body is indeed disfigured, lacerated, stained with blood. But in that counte-

nance, lifted up to heaven, what mild confidence beams forth! You see him anticipating immediate death. But death has no terrors. Death brings no agitation. In death he sees only the ascent of his spirit to his Father. What conscious uprightness, what firmness, what elevation of character, does this scene discover! Jesus has suffered,—drank deeply of suffering. But his spirit is unbroken; his mind is clear and collected: his heart is warm and active; it retains its hold on God."

1810. THE UNIVERSALITY OF CHRISTIANITY A PROOF OF ITS DIVINE ORIGIN. "I wish at this time to call your attention to the extent of the influence which Jesus ascribes to himself in the text:—'I am the light of the world.'

"He here represents himself as sent to diffuse his lustre through all the regions of the earth, to introduce a religion for the whole human race, to improve the human character in every nation under heaven, to be a universal benefactor, to guide the steps of all men, however widely dispersed, to a better world. . . . . .

"From the whole tenor of the New Testament, we learn that Jesus Christ claimed to himself the high character of the guide, instructor, and Lord of the whole human family. He declared himself commissioned to diffuse most salutary doctrines through the earth, to bring all nations to one faith, to introduce a new worship in the place of the various systems which divided mankind, to unite the discordant world under himself as a common head. . . . .

"It is, I think, an undisputed fact, that, before the time of Jesus Christ, no man had ever appeared who professed himself authorized by the universal Father to proclaim one religion to all mankind. The character of a Divine instructor of the whole world had never before been assumed. There had, indeed, been many who pretended to communications from God. Such were most of the ancient legislators. But they claimed only the commission to instruct the particular nation to which they were sent. Even Moses and the prophets were limited to one people. The plan of bringing all men to the belief and practice of one religion was never contemplated. No mind had formed so bold an attempt. The object was so little suited to their selfish principles of action, and presented such insuperable difficulties, that it does not appear ever to have occupied the thoughts of an individual. Before the time of Christ there had been great conquerors,

who had cherished, and almost accomplished, the scheme of universal dominion; but they were satisfied with a dominion over the bodies and outward actions of men. They aspired not to subdue their minds. They overturned governments, but left religion untouched. It is an argument in favour of Jesus Christ, that he appeared in a character altogether new. His plan of producing a change in the religion of the world was wholly his own. May we not argue, that, if he had acted on merely human principles, he would have resembled those who went before him? Human nature is the same in all ages. There is a peculiarity in the character of Christ, an originality in his purpose, a remoteness from the common views of men, a superiority in his objects to the greatest men who had appeared before him, which we cannot easily explain but on the supposition of his Divine commission. This great design suits the Son of God, but cannot easily be reconciled with another character. . . . . .

"That a Jew should devote himself to the work of bringing the world to a participation of the same religion, and this a new religion too, was indeed wonderful. There never was a people among whom so strong a national spirit existed as among the Jews; and their national pride was peculiarly built on this idea, that they had been, and ever should be, distinguished by their religious privileges from the rest of mankind. The idea of a religion, which should be the common and equal property and blessing of all nations, was the last idea which would have entered the mind of a Jew. Judea was the most unlikely place for the growth of so liberal a sentiment, so diffusive a system.

"Let me point out some of those features of the gospel which fit it for being a universal religion. The representations of God, given by Jesus Christ, are fitted to draw to him the hearts and hopes of all human beings. Under all other religions, the Divinity was represented as sustaining a peculiar relation to the particular nation for which the religion was designed. . . . . .

"But Jesus represented him as the Father of all, as having no regard to outward distinctions, as the God of Jew and Gentile, as looking with a father's compassion on those nations who had wandered from him, and as extending his arms to receive them. In the gospel, the *paternal* character of God is continually brought to view. 'Our Father,' is the language in which we are to address him; and all men are

invited to approach in the character of children. This is at once a very tender and a very noble sentiment. We, indeed, are so accustomed to it, that we see nothing singular in that religion which enforces it. But we should go back to the age of Christ. We should remember the blindness of the idolater, and the narrow feelings of the Jew; and then we shall be struck with the elevated and enlarged mind of Jesus Christ, who so clearly taught that God is no respecter of persons, that he is the God and Father of all men, and that before his throne all nations may bow and find equal acceptance. . . . . .

" Again, another feature of the gospel which renders it fit to be a universal religion is this. The worship it prescribes is remarkably free from forms, rules, ceremonies, and thus it is adapted to all climates, all modes of life, all states of society, and other circumstances under which men are placed. . . . . .

" It is very remarkable, that when he was brought up and living amidst the pomp, and show, and forms, and bigotry of the Jews, he should yet teach a religion in which the whole stress is laid upon sentiments, dispositions, and principles, which give to forms all their value; in which the worship of God in spirit and in truth is declared to be the only acceptable worship, and in which nothing of the outward religion and burdensome ritual of his time is to be found; in which are enjoined only two positive institutions, so simple and so expressive that they may be observed by all men of all nations with equal ease and with constant improvement. Does not this purity, this simplicity, this spirituality of the gospel, substantiate the claim of Jesus, that he came indeed from God, to be the light of all mankind? . . . . .

" Let me conclude this branch of the subject with directing you to another feature of the gospel which fits it to be a universal religion. It is a plain, perspicuous religion, and suited to the comprehension and wants of all classes of society. A universal religion ought to have, if I may so speak, the clearness, brightness, of the sun, and to diffuse its beams of truth and consolation on high and low, rich and poor,—on all the varieties of the social state. This is eminently the character of the gospel, and distinguishes it from all other religions. Jesus Christ, whilst he claimed the highest title, yet descended in a sense to the level of the humblest of mankind. He dispensed his religion in familiar language, in striking and easy comparisons, in affecting narratives, and in brief

and comprehensive precepts. He did not, like the ancient teachers, affect a distance from the multitude, and reserve his mysteries, incomprehensible by vulgar minds, for select disciples. He addressed all men with one voice, with the same doctrines, promises, and admonition; and, what is remarkable, whilst he instructed the ignorant, he yet presented to the refined and intelligent more sublime and interesting truths than they had ever conceived before. He was simple and familiar, but in reading his discourses we discover a majesty in his simplicity, an authority mingled with his condescension. He taught as one who came to instruct the race, for he spoke on subjects which come home to every man's breast. He did not adapt himself to the circumstances of any particular age, or nation, or rank. He spoke of that God on whom all men depend, of that obedience and love which all men owe, of those sorrows which pierce every heart, of that sin which burdens every conscience, of that death which terminates every mere earthly prospect, and of that futurity to which the eyes of all nations have ever turned with inquiring anxiety. This is the excellence of the gospel, that it is fitted for the many, for the mass of mankind, in every age and every nation. It does not treat of local or temporary interests. It warns of danger to which all are exposed, enjoins virtues which all may practise, and offers consolation which all at some seasons need. Its spirit, which is universal love and benevolence, is fitted for all climes, for all classes. It makes the true dignity of man in every condition; it forms the happiness of families and communities; and it is the best preparation for happiness in heaven. Surely a religion so suited to the whole human race is worthy the universal Father. And when we consider the circumstances of him who proclaimed it, and the darkness, narrowness, and corruption of the age in which he lived, have we not conclusive proof that he came from God, that the end for which he was sent will be accomplished, that he will yet be the light of the world, in the most extensive sense of the words, and that his truth, designed for all nations, will finally be extended to all the regions of the earth?

"Before this sun of righteousness, the mists of error, superstition, idolatry, will melt away; all nations, receiving one pure faith, will be reduced to peace. The predicted time, when the lion and lamb shall lie down together, will come; from an enlightened and a united world one offering

will ascend to the common Father and Redeemer. These are prospects which almost overpower belief by their vastness and their happiness. But God has sent his Son to be the light of the world; and causes are in operation sufficiently powerful to produce these desired effects. The diffusion of Christianity through so many nations, amidst so many difficulties in the past, is a pledge of its future progress. This religion is now the religion of the civilized world, of the most improved nations, of nations who are extending themselves through the earth, and who, according to all human probability, must acquire a decided influence over all other countries. Here, then, is a rock and foundation of hope to the good man amidst the fluctuations of the world. The cause of truth, holiness, and human improvement, is the cause of God himself."

1811. CHRIST'S RELATIONS TO THE RACE. "The exalted state of our Saviour is a subject on which the Scriptures often dwell, although it is necessarily attended with a degree of obscurity. The manner in which he now exists can very faintly be conceived by us. Our experience is limited to this world. Jesus is the inhabitant of heaven; he has entered on an immortal life, and is clothed with power, such as is unknown amongst men,—a power felt through heaven and earth,—a power which is one day to be displayed in the most wonderful effects. . . . . .

"That God has invested his Son with authority over the whole human race, to accomplish the most benevolent ends, is not to be wondered at as something unprecedented, and unlike everything we see in the course of providence. This relation of Jesus Christ to the human race is not altogether without example. On the contrary, it is God's common method to connect one being with others, for the sake of imparting to them the blessings we need. All the good which we have received has flowed to us, not immediately from the Father, but from other beings, who have received power, authority, wisdom, and love from God, that they might be sources of good to us and all around us. . . . . .

"It may be objected to the views which have now been given as to the power to which Christ is exalted for human salvation, that we do not see such sensible effects as might be expected from this universal sovereign. To this I answer, that a being so far exalted above us must have innumerable modes of operation which we cannot discern or comprehend.

His agency may continually be mingled with human events, and yet we not discern it. No being acts, if I may use the words, with so much silence and secrecy as the Infinite Father. He is ever present, and ever operating, and yet we see him not, we hear him not; and his Son Jesus Christ, who is the image of his power as well as of all his perfections, may act in the same unseen, yet efficacious manner. The narrowness of our vision is sufficient to account for our not distinguishing more sensibly the operation of Jesus Christ in human affairs. . . . . .

"The agency of Christ is at present silent and concealed; but the time is approaching, when the veil which conceals our Lord will be removed, when he will be revealed, with the angels who now obey him, in the glory of the Father, when his power will be felt through the regions of the dead, when all who have lived will receive new life at his hands, and when all will surround his judgment-seat. Then will be seen, and felt, and acknowledged by all, the exalted authority of Jesus Christ. . . . . .

"At that day men will be as angels, and will be associated in a measure with angels; and then will be understood that striking language of Paul, that it is the purpose of God to 'gather together in one all things in Christ.'"

1811. CHRIST'S RELATIONS TO THE CHURCH. "By his Church, our Saviour does not mean a party, bearing the name of a human leader, distinguished by a form or an opinion, and, on the ground of this distinction, denying the name or character of Christians to all but themselves. He means by it the body of his friends and followers, *who truly imbibe his spirit*, no matter by what name they are called, in what house they worship, by what peculiarities of mode and opinion they are distinguished, under what sky they live, or what language they speak. These are the true church,—men made better, made holy, virtuous, by his religion,—men who, hoping in his promises, keep his commands.

"Ever since Christ's church was established, such a unity has existed, such characters have been formed by the gospel; and this influence it will exert through all ages. As we have said, we have reason to suppose, from what has been experienced, that great changes will take place in the present state of Christianity; and the time is, perhaps, coming, when all our present sects will live only in history. But the influences of the gospel will not therefore cease; the church will not die with the sects into which it is broken. On the con-

trary, we may hope that the vine of God will flourish more, when these branches are lopped off which exhaust its strength and bear little fruit. Men will then learn that Christianity is designed for practice, and not for contention; ceasing to censure others, they will aim to reform themselves. The simple gospel, divested of human addition, no longer disfigured by absurd explanation, will be the centre and bond of union to the world. The name of *Christian* will absorb all other names; and the spirit of love to God and man will take the place of unhallowed zeal and bitter contention. Human churches, human establishments,—the effects and monuments of folly and ambition, — will fall. But the church of Christ—which is another name for piety, goodness, righteousness, peace, and love—shall endure for ever. . . . . .

"The recovery of men to holiness, by the diffusion of a holy doctrine, was not one of the inferior objects of Christ's mission, not an accidental end, which may fail, and yet his great purpose be accomplished. This was the central work which brought him into the world. Forsaking all other ends, he lived for this,—to unfold, and confirm, and enforce a religion which should fill the whole earth, and subsist to the end of time. . . . . .

"It is a delightful and elevating thought, that the Son of God, of whom the Scriptures speak in such magnificent language, has this peculiar interest in the sanctification and recovery of our race; that after living to teach, and dying to confirm, his truth, he is now clothed with majesty and might, to extend it through the earth. Can that cause fail which has this advocate in heaven; that kingdom be overthrown which this immortal and benignant Sovereign watches with a constant care? We must never imagine Jesus Christ withdrawn from the support of his Church, or indifferent to the holiness and virtue of our race."

SECTION FOURTH.

SOCIETY.

1810. PROVIDENCE MANIFESTED IN THE PROGRESS OF SOCIETY. "We must not suffer the miseries which history brings to view to fill our minds, and to crowd from them the animating conviction of an overruling Providence, which

will make light spring up in darkness, and the furious waves subside into peace. We ought to remember, that, whilst society has been so agitated, innumerable individuals have, in all ages, enjoyed peace and security; that, in the family retreat where history never penetrates, the domestic virtues have been cherished, and all the endearments and improvements of social intercourse enjoyed. We ought to remember, that, amidst the convulsions of the world, the cause of truth and religion has ever maintained its ground, and been silently extending its influence; that the race has been progressive; that the light of revelation, which at first faintly gleamed in an obscure corner of the world, is now beaming on many nations; and that treasures of knowledge and wisdom have constantly been accumulating as they have been transmitted from age to age. Let us not, then, waver in the belief, which there is so much to confirm, that there is a wise and almighty Providence extended over all the changes of society.

"As the individuals of the human race pass through stages of helplessness, inexperience, and suffering, before they attain the vigour of their powers, so the race itself is destined to pass through its infancy and growth, before it attains to wisdom and happiness. As the individual improves by experience, and gains the best lessons from suffering, so, perhaps, society is to be instructed and ameliorated by calamity. Future ages may look back on the present, and, whilst they shudder at the scenes of confusion and bloodshed which are now exhibited, may be kept from that depravity of manners, that selfish, mercenary spirit, that neglect of Christianity and of education, that pride and ambition, which are the sources of our miseries. But, whatever be the methods of Providence, we may be assured that the interests of virtue and religion will triumph, and with these all the interests of society will be advanced. Nothing is wanting, except the extension of pure principle and pure manners, to make society happy; and without this, all other improvements will be of no avail. But this *will be* effected. . . . .

"The time is coming when the wicked will be remembered only to instruct and improve, and the miseries of men be remembered only to illustrate the triumphs of goodness and happiness. Let us, then, never faint; but in the darkest period cleave to the cause of righteousness, seek to bless and reform mankind, and exult in the thought that our labours shall not be in vain in the Lord Jesus."

1804. JUSTICE. "It is right that every *individual* should be secured in all enjoyments which consist with *general* enjoyment. An individual in a state of nature would suffer a wrong, if made to experience any unnecessary harm or privation. Thus, before all compact, it appears that individuals have a right to appropriate the useful objects of the world; and social compact is necessary only to establish certain rules or principles according to which those objects may be appropriated to general advantage. These rules or principles form what we term the rights of man; they grow out of that eternal moral truth, which is the fountain of all right, that the *greatest good* should be promoted; they belong to the nature of man, as a being capable of enjoyment, and dependent for comfort and support on the productions of the earth. It is important thus to consider the foundation of property and of the rights of man, that we may form a correct opinion of that *Justice* which consists in respecting these rights and that property. If the institution of property originates in the general good, if the right of property be nothing more than the right of the individual to enjoy all which is consistent with general good, then *justice is in truth one with benevolence.* It consists in embracing the general welfare, and in revering those rules and principles on which this welfare depends. . . .

"Justice differs from mercy, not in its nature, but in the circumstances under which it is exercised. Both justice and mercy have the same object, the general good; but justice is limited to those cases where public good prescribes a clear, precise, and unchanging course of action; while mercy is exercised in circumstances to which no definite rules can be applied, and in which the general good requires that the individual should be left to his own judgment and discretion. Thus justice is something more than that petty honesty which seeks nothing but self, and which is contented with regarding such established principles as cannot be violated without incurring punishment or disgrace. Its whole nature is *impartial, diffusive benevolence.*

"I would further observe, that, if it be the nature of justice to avoid whatever is clearly opposed to our neighbour, it is unjust, in our dealings with others, to desire and seek more than the value of our commodities. Mutual benefit is the very end of trade or commerce. We know, when our neighbour contracts with us, that he expects an equivalent. We know that he makes a transfer of his property for some

valuable consideration, and we have no right to offer as an equivalent what we certainly know bears no proportion to the property he transfers. A just man will never lose sight of the interests of his neighbour. He will not, indeed, feel himself bound to take the same care of another's property as of his own, for this is impracticable. He will suppose that every man, who possesses common understanding, knows best his own interests, and on this ground he will deal with him. But when he certainly knows that his neighbour is injuring himself, that a proposed contract cannot be attended with mutual benefit, he has no right to presume that his neighbour is taking care of himself. As surely as he regards the rights of others, he will feel that he has no right to offer as an equivalent what he knows has no value.

"My friends, believe it, and impress it on your hearts, that justice unconnected with benevolence is not worth possessing. It is the growth of selfishness, and knaves may boast of it. That man, who makes his own private interest supreme, who cares not how much his neighbour suffers, if he may himself be advanced, who can take pleasure in gains which he knows are necessarily connected with the loss and injury of others, who, under pretence of leaving his neighbour to provide for himself, will impose upon him, as an equivalent, what he knows to be worth nothing,—that man may talk of integrity, and hold high his head in a mercenary world, but he knows not the meaning of justice. He never felt that generous regard to right which is of more worth, and confers more happiness, than all the gains of selfishness and iniquity. It is not hard to determine what such a man would choose, if he had no alternative but poverty or injustice. This, my friends, is the test of our character. The principles of that man are worth little, who will not sacrifice all he possesses to principle; and can you expect such sacrifice from the selfish soul, which is willing, yea, happy, that others should fall, if his own interests may be advanced? Beware of selfishness; consider that you can never obtain a right to do injury, that the foundation of all property is general good. . . . . .

"If such be perfect justice, so incorruptible, what reason have we to fear that there is little of this principle, when we see the expedients and precautions which are adopted to prevent men from abusing a trifling trust, from sacrificing the interests of their neighbours to a trifling gain! We carry our own shame on our foreheads. Most of our civil

institutions grow out of our corruptions. We cannot live without mutual dependence, and yet we are forced to hedge each other round, to bind and shackle each other, to institute inquiries, and to watch with anxious caution lest we should abuse each other's necessities, and take advantage of trust to betray it. If men were what men should be, we should feel our property as safe in the hands of others as in our own. We should find in every man a guardian, instead of an invader, of our rights. We should lay open our possessions. We should want no better security than our neighbour's word, and no better witness than our neighbour's conscience. Imagination dwells with delight on this state of peaceful, unsuspicious, undisturbed enjoyment. Is it never to be made a reality? . . . . .

"Justice forbids us to borrow what we have no prospect of repaying. When we are reduced to such low circumstances, it is more honourable to beg, to cast ourselves on mercy, than to deceive our neighbour into an opinion of our ability, and thus to rob him of his property. We should never subject ourselves to larger demands than we shall probably be able to answer. We should never use arts that we may obtain larger credit than we deserve. We have no right to borrow when our circumstances are such as, if known, would prevent others from lending. We have no right to borrow that we may run some desperate risk for retrieving a falling fortune. Whenever we have contracted debts, we should be prompt and earnest to discharge them. We should particularly remember the labourer who depends on daily wages for subsistence. The Scriptures tell us that his hire crieth unto the Lord for vengeance. We should never allow ourselves pleasures and indulgences while our neighbour is complaining for want of what we owe him. Let us consider that nothing belongs to us while we are indebted to another. It is our duty to use the property in our hands as the property of our creditor. He has a right to expect that we be frugal, that we retrench all unnecessary expenses, that we exercise prudence, economy, and regularity, that we avoid all desperate hazards, and labour patiently that we may render him his due. . . . . .

"Power confers no claim, and weakness can impair no right. It is the glorious design of civil institutions to concentre public strength in support of individual right, to guard the property of the feeble by the majesty of the state. But

no government can fully accomplish the ends of its institution. No outward penalties can supply the place of an inward principle of justice. They who have power can always find some opportunity of abusing it. Justice forbids us to violate the possessions of those who depend upon us, and who therefore dare not provoke our displeasure by the assertion of their rights. It forbids us to abuse any circumstance which puts our neighbour in our power, or to extort his consent to injurious measures, or to reduce him to the necessity of sacrificing his property, by threatening him with evils to which we are able to expose him. . . . . .

"Justice brands as robbery the abuse of power for suppressing the claims of the feeble, or alarming the fears of the dependent. It recommends the weak and poor to our protection. It renders the defenceless hovel of poverty as sacred as the palace of affluence. It makes the cause of the oppressed our own, and animates us with generous zeal to rescue the helpless from the grasp of the rapacious. . . . . .

"Justice, being sincere regard to right, requires us to disapprove and to discourage the imperious. It requires us at all times to throw our whole weight into the scale of the injured. It forbids us to connive at imposition, to furnish others with the means or temptations to fraud or violence, to reduce them to dishonesty, that we may be benefited. It calls us to frown on the base, to separate ourselves from their fellowship, to keep none of their counsels, to bring their designs to light, and to crush their schemes of dishonesty. Men are prone to stoop to successful villany. They seem to forget the steps by which wicked men have ascended to eminence. They forget the tears of the oppressed, the necessities of the plundered, the hopeless poverty of the fatherless and widow. But justice is inflexible. It can give no countenance to extortion and dishonesty. It looks through the false splendour with which the wicked are surrounded, and sees and detests their baseness. No threats, no seductions, can bend the just man to smile on the knave and the robber. He takes a firm, elevated ground. He dares to be poor himself; and he dares to remember the oppressions and injuries of the great. . . . . .

"A just man appeals from the laws of the land to the dictates of conscience. He does not cling to every shadow of right. He does not take advantage of ambiguity of expression, to beat down what he knows to be a substantial

claim. He does not abuse the ignorance of his neighbour, and uphold, by legal subtleties, an unfounded demand. He does not press even his undoubted rights too close, lest he should border upon injustice. He reverences the laws as they are the guardians of right. He holds nothing merely because the laws do not take it away. He seizes nothing merely because the laws do not prohibit it. He considers that laws do not create right, that there are eternal principles of truth and rectitude to which all civil laws must be reduced as their standard; and to the principle written by God on the heart, and confirmed in the Holy Scriptures, he refers all his actions which relate to the property of others."

1807. BENEVOLENCE UNITED WITH WISDOM. "I am sensible, my friends, that I am cautioning you against an excess to which you are not very much exposed. It is not the fault of the present day, that men, in their zeal for others, forget themselves. We hear of romance, but there is very little of romantic benevolence in the world. The great difficulty is to draw men out of themselves; and when it is so hard to persuade them to take a few steps beyond their narrow circle, there seems little reason for cautioning them against running too far and hurrying too fast from this narrow point. But to those who have caught some of the light and life of Christian goodness, whose hearts go abroad and embrace the family of their Father in Heaven, it may not be useless to suggest, that the influence of your characters very much depends on your uniting with the amiableness of the dove the wisdom of the serpent. Let men see that your kindness is not a rash, sudden, ungoverned feeling, but a rational, calm, steady principle,—an image of Divine benevolence, which is regular, wise, and marked by order, harmony, and extensive views in all its operations. Let them see that your benevolence is not a transitory emotion, which is excited by some present object, and which sacrifices future good and future means of usefulness to accomplish some pleasing end immediately in its view; but teach them that Christian benevolence, with all its ardour, is yet consistent with the highest prudence, that it examines its objects with calmness, anticipates consequences, acts on a wide and generous scale."

1809. PEACE ON EARTH. "Peace is a state of harmony between beings who have one interest, are alive to the same pleasures and pains, and participate in each other's views

and feelings. Our Saviour, in his last prayer for his disciples, has taught us what he meant by the peace which he came to establish on earth, when he expresses again and again this desire, that they might 'be *one*, even as he and the Father were one.'

"By this peace we are not to understand merely that state of things in which men abstain from mutual injury. It is that mutual affection which prompts us to every sacrifice for one another's good, and renders each happy to do and to suffer for his friend. Peace is sometimes spoken of as a negative, inactive state. But in the gospel it expresses something very different,—the union of good hearts, which are inflamed with the best sentiments, which are attracted by congeniality, and which conspire to act for the common welfare. This peace is not the profession of lips, but living concord.

"The end for which Jesus Christ came was to convert men into real friends, to make them objects of each other's attachment, to give them a common feeling and a common interest. He came to operate on the spirit, to produce inward effects, to implant a principle of true love, to fit men for the most endearing relations. He came to adorn the human character, to strip it of everything fierce and repulsive, to make it attractive, to shed round it the mild lustre of benevolence. He came to take from men's hands the implements of war, and to open their arms to embrace one another. He came to dispel distrust, suspicion, and jealousy, to render man worthy of the confidence of his brother, to bring men to that exalted state in which they will lay bare their whole souls without fear. He came to draw men off from separate interests, and to win them to objects in which all may combine, to which all may lend their aid, and which will thus form the means of affectionate intercourse. He came to soften insensibility, to make many hearts beat in unison, to excite the tenderest concern for each individual's welfare, and the most generous, disinterested labours for the common good. He came to root out envy, to give every person an interest in the excellence of others, to make us look with delight on all promises of goodness, to rouse us to be helpers of each other's purity and perfection, to teach us to feel that the progress of our brethren is our own. He came to form such a union amongst men as would lead them to pour freely from their hearts the noblest views

and feelings, and thus become the means of enkindling every grace and virtue, and mutual sources of love and wisdom. He came, in a word, so to bind us together that we should count nothing material or spiritual our own, but hold all things in common, and give all to the general well-being."

1812. PARTY SPIRIT. "I wish to address you at this time on the subject of party spirit, the great instrument by which free states are divided and destroyed. As this spirit may be considered the sin of our nation, and as it is the spring of so many crimes, we may with great propriety consider it on this day, which is designed to produce national humility and reformation. . . . . .

"Party spirit is by no means the same thing with warm attachment to a party, and with asserting with spirit its principles. It is very possible to be connected with a party, and yet to escape the contagion of party spirit. We shall be most unjust, if we ascribe this spirit to all who, from political connexions, engage in political contests. We are possessed by this bad spirit, not when we join a party, but when we prefer its interests to the good of the state; when we propose, as our end, to keep our party in power, and are indifferent to the character of the men by whom this end is promoted; when, having taken our side, we determine to keep it, because we will not acknowledge that we have erred, and because our advancement or interests are involved in the success of our party. This is party spirit,—the offspring of selfishness, passion, pride, jealousy, and love of distinction;—a spirit which is willing to sacrifice the whole to a part, which hypocritically pretends devotion to the public good for the mere purpose of getting or keeping influence, which will injure the state rather than make concessions to opponents, or renounce principles which it has pledged itself to support. Such is party spirit, the worst enemy of free governments, the enemy from which we have everything to fear,—which has already laid its polluting and destroying hand on our best institutions, and has made the sacred fabric of the state tremble to its foundation. . . . . .

"Party spirit corrupts the individual. There is no passion which has such influence in perverting the judgment and darkening the understanding. A slight observation will teach you that the man who devotes himself to the interests of his party loses all independence of mind. Let his party do what it may, he sees nothing wrong in their measures, or

at least he vindicates them as if satisfied of their correctness. He takes his tone from his leaders, and judges as he is told to judge. In vain are the principles and falsehoods of his party exposed. Too proud to retract, and pledged to support the cause, he flies to artful evasion or clamorous assertion, and continues to justify gross iniquity. You may look to any man for fairness of mind and sensibility to truth, rather than to a confirmed partisan. He gives up his reason, his dignity as a rational being, to his party. Party spirit has as fatal effects on the heart as on the understanding. The man who surrenders himself to the interests of his party becomes a malignant man. Irritation becomes the habit of his mind. He cannot think of his opponents without animosity. He cannot speak of them without bitterness. He condemns all they do, believes all the crimes which are imputed to them, and circulates, if he does not magnify, calumnious rumours. He watches for their halting, exults in their vices, and looks unmoved on their miseries. Am I wrong in saying that nothing hardens the heart, nothing sheds malignant poison through the feelings, more than party spirit? Look anywhere for candour, generosity and tenderness, rather than to the breast of a partisan. Where this spirit prevails in a community, fellow-citizens learn to hate each other more than they hate a foreign foe, and thus become inflamed and ripe for civil convulsions.

"From what has been said, you will easily comprehend the next evil of party spirit, when it prevails in a state. It reconciles the people and their rulers to the most criminal practices. The sense of right is gradually impaired, and at length borne down, by the desire of exalting the party. The end sanctifies the means. The doctrine is almost explicitly asserted, that moral principle is not to be strictly applied to political movements. The question is not, Are measures righteous?—but, Will they build up the party? Intrigue and stratagem are called policy. To lie, to mutilate the truth, to deceive the ignorant, to pour out slander on good men,—these become things of course, so common as to be expected, so common that the moral sensibility is at length blunted, and we hear of them without indignation. The partisan is insensibly goaded and incited by numbers into measures from which his better principles would at first have recoiled. So many share his guilt, that his own part of the burden seems light. At length he loses the feeling of re-

sponsibility for his political conduct, and there is nothing too base which you have not to fear from him, if his party may be advanced by it.

"Another tremendous evil attending the prevalence of party spirit is this: the door of honour and office is thrown open to the worst men in the community. The only question respecting the candidate for office is, Can he serve the party? It is of little importance that he is abhorred by the good, and despised even by his own associates, that he is known to be unprincipled, that none will trust the smallest part of their property to his hands. Will he serve the cause? is the only question. If with want of principle he combines great cunning,—a combination not uncommon,—he is the very man the party want. His vice is his recommendation. Power and honour are thrown into his polluted hands. Base as he is, he is adorned with the badges of office, the marks of public confidence; and though unfaithful in everything, he is very seldom unfaithful to the party which raised him to power. He never forgets to whom he owes his elevation, and the patronage and influence of his station are all employed to throw office and wealth into the hands of his confederates. Office is made a bribe. Exclusive privileges are granted to the party. New laws are made, ancient usages abolished, ancient institutions thrown down, to confirm the dominant party. My friends, you can easily conceive the effect on public morals, when the worst men have the easiest access to power, when the glare of station is thrown around the unprincipled, when character has ceased to be a qualification for public confidence. You can easily conceive the instability, and the ruinous influence, of that government which is administered for the very purpose of giving strength to a faction, and crushing the falling party. . . . . .

"When party spirit has reached this tremendous height, when it wields the power of the state, I need not tell you that liberty is in effect lost. The name of liberty may, indeed, ring through the land; but who is free? The very adherents of the dominant party are in bondage. The vengeance of the party hangs over the individual who dares to think or act for himself. The leaders issue laws, dictate the measures, say who shall be chosen, and select the arts and falsehoods which will best suit the occasion. The obedient partisan opens his lips to receive the invented lie, and puts his hands to the vile task which is assigned him.

In such a state of things public sentiment is a name;—the voice of a few leaders alone is heard and obeyed. If the dominant party are in chains, what can we hope for the minority? No pains are spared to strip them of their just and lawful influence in the state. Their rights are trampled under foot. They are divided, broken into fragments, that they may exert no joint power for counteracting their adversaries. Do they proclaim their wrongs, they are menaced. Freedom of speech is a crime, is treason; opposition to the reigning faith is rebellion. Passive obedience is preached to them by the very men who rose to power by proclaiming liberty. The venerable patriot hears himself denounced by men who hate him because he knows their baseness, and who are fattening on the spoils of that country for which he toiled and bled. Thus *despotism in effect* grows out of party spirit, and *despotism in form*, in its true and undisguised shape, is not slow to follow."

1810 (*April 5, Day of Public Fast*). THE MILITARY DESPOTISM OF FRANCE. "Am I asked, what there is so peculiar in our times! I answer:—In the very heart of Europe, in the centre of the civilized world, a new power has suddenly arisen on the ruins of old institutions, peculiar in its character, and most ruinous in its influence. We there see a nation, which, from its situation, its fertility, and population, has always held a commanding rank in Europe, suddenly casting off the form of government, the laws, the habits, the spirit, by which it was assimilated to surrounding nations, and by which it gave to them the power of restraining it? and all at once assuming a new form, and erecting a new government, free in name and profession, but holding at its absolute disposal the property and life of every subject, and directing all its energies to the subjugation of foreign countries. We see the supreme power of this nation passing in rapid succession from one hand to another. But its object never changes. We see it dividing and corrupting by its arts, and then overwhelming by its arms, the nations which surround it. We see one end steadily kept in view,—the creation of an irresistible military power. For this end, we see every man, in the prime of life, subjected to military service. We see military talent everywhere excited, and by every means rewarded. The arts of life, agriculture, commerce, all are of secondary value. In short, we see a mighty nation sacrificing every blessing in the prosecution of an unprincipled attempt at universal conquest.

"The result you well know. The surrounding nations, unprepared for this new conflict, and absolutely incapacitated by their old habits and institutions to meet this new power on equal terms, have fallen in melancholy succession; and each, as it has fallen, has swelled by its plunder the power and rapacity of its conquerors. We now behold this nation triumphant over Continental Europe. Its armies are immensely numerous; yet the number is not the circumstance which renders them most formidable. These armies have been trained to conquest by the most perfect discipline. At their head are generals who have risen only by military merit. They are habituated to victory, and their enemies are habituated to defeat.

"All this immense power is now centred in one hand, wielded by one mind,—a mind formed in scenes of revolution and blood,—a mind most vigorous and capacious, but whose capacity is filled with plans of dominion and devastation. It has not room for one thought of mercy. The personal character of Napoleon is of itself sufficient to inspire the gloomiest forebodings. But in addition to his lust for power, he is almost impelled by the necessity of his circumstances to carry on the bloody work of conquest. His immense armies, the only foundations of his empire, must be supported. Impoverished France, however, cannot give them support. They must therefore live on the spoils of other nations. But the nations which they successively spoil, and whose industry and arts they extinguish, cannot long sustain them. Hence they must pour themselves into new regions. Hence plunder, devastation, and new conquests, are not merely the outrages of wanton barbarity; they are essential even to the existence of this tremendous power.

"What overwhelming, disheartening prospects are these! In the midst of Christendom, this most sanguinary power has reared its head, and holds the world in defiance; and now, let me ask, how are we impressed in these dark disastrous times? Here is every form of misery. We are called to sympathize with fallen greatness, with descendants of ancient sovereigns, hurled from their thrones, and cast out to contempt; and if these do not move us, our sympathy is demanded by a wretched peasantry, driven from their humble roofs, and abandoned to hunger and unsheltered poverty. The decaying city, the desolated country, the weeping widow, the forsaken orphan, call on us for our tears. Nations,

broken in spirit, yet forced to smother their sorrows, call on us, with a silent eloquence, to feel for their wrongs; and how are we moved by these scenes of ruin, horror, and alarm? Does there not, my friends, prevail among us a cold indifference, as if all this were nothing to us, as if no tie of brotherhood bound us to these sufferers? Are we not prone to follow the authors of this ruin with an admiration of their power and success, which almost represses our abhorrence of their unsparing cruelty?

"But we are not merely insensible to the calamities of other nations. There is a still stranger insensibility to our own dangers. We seem determined to believe that this storm will spend all its force at a distance. The idea, that *we* are marked out as victims of this all-destroying despotism, *that our turn is to come and perhaps is near*,—this idea strikes on most minds as a fiction. Our own deep interest in the present conflict is unfelt even by some who feel as they ought for other nations.

"It is asked, What has a nation so distant as America to fear from the power of France? I answer:—The history of all ages teaches us, all our knowledge of human nature teaches us, *that a nation of vast and unrivalled power is to be feared by all the world.* Even had France attained her present greatness under a long established government, without any of the habits which the Revolution has formed, the world ought to view her with trembling jealousy. What nation ever enjoyed such power without abusing it? But France is not a common nation. We must not apply to her common rules. Conquest is her trade, her business, her recreation. The lust of power is the very vital principle of this new nation. Her strength is drained out to supply her armies;—her talents are exhausted in preparing schemes of wider domination. WAR, WAR is the solemn note which resounds through every department of state. And is such a nation to be viewed with indifference, with unconcern? Have *we* nothing to fear, because *an ocean rolls between us?*

"Will it be said that the conqueror has too much work at home to care for America? He has indeed work at home; but, unhappily for this country, that work ever brings *us* to his view. There is one work, one object, which is ever present to the mind of Napoleon. It mingles with all his thoughts. It is his dream by night, his care by day. He did not forget it on the shores of the Baltic, or the banks of

the Danube. *The ruin of England* is the first, the most settled purpose of his heart. That nation is the only barrier to his ambition. In the opulence, the energy, the public spirit, the liberty of England, he sees the only obstacles to universal dominion. England once fallen, and the civilized world lies at his feet. England erect, and there is one asylum for virtue, magnanimity, freedom; one spark which may set the world on fire; one nation to encourage the disaffected, to hold up to the oppressed the standard of revolt. England, therefore, is the great object of the hostile fury of the French emperor. England is the great end of his plans; and his plans of course embrace all nations which come in contact with England; which love or hate her, which can give her support, or contribute to her downfal.

"*We*, then, we may be assured, are not overlooked by Napoleon. We are a nation sprung from England. We have received from her our laws, and many of our institutions. We speak her language, and in her language we dare to express the indignation which she feels at oppression. Besides, we have other ties which connect us with England. We are a commercial people, commercial by habit, commercial by our very situation. But no nation can be commercial without maintaining some connexion with England,—without having many common interests with her,—without strengthening the foundations of her greatness. England is the great emporium of the world; and the conqueror knows that it is only by extinguishing the commerce of the world, by bringing every commercial nation to bear his yoke, that he can fix a mortal wound on England. Besides, we are the neighbours of some of the most valuable English colonies, and can exert an important influence on those channels of her commerce, those sources of her opulence.

"Can we, then, suppose that the ambitious, the keen-sighted Napoleon overlooks *us* in his scheme of universal conquest; that he wants nothing of us, and is content that we should prosper and be at peace, because we are so distant from his throne? Has he not already told us that we must embark in his cause? Has he not himself declared war for us against England?

"Will it be said, he wants not to conquer us, but only wishes us to be his allies? *Allies of France!* Is there a man who does not shudder at the thought? Is there one who would not rather struggle nobly, and perish under her

open enmity, than be crushed by the embrace of her friendship,—*her alliance?* . . .

"Will it be said that these evils are *political* evils, and that it is not the province of a minister of religion to concern himself with temporal affairs? Did I think, my friends, that only political evils were to be dreaded,—did I believe that *the minds, the character, the morals, the religion*, of our nation would remain untouched,—did I see in French domination nothing but the loss of your wealth, your luxuries, your splendour,—could I hope that it would leave unsullied your purity of faith and manners,—I would be silent. But religion and virtue, as well as liberty and opulence, wither under the power of France. The French Revolution was founded in infidelity, impiety, and atheism. This is the spirit of her chiefs, her most distinguished men; and this spirit she breathes, wherever she has influence. It is the most unhappy effect of French domination, that it degrades the human character to the lowest point. No manly virtues grow under this baleful, malignant star. France begins her conquests by corruption, by venality, by bribes; and where she succeeds, her deadly policy secures her from commotion by quenching all those generous sentiments which produce revolt under oppression. The conqueror thinks his work not half finished until *the mind is conquered*, its energy broken, its feeling for the public welfare subdued. Such are the effects of subjection to France, or, what is the same thing, of *alliance* with her; and when we consider how much this subjection is desired by Napoleon, when we consider the power and the arts which he can combine for effecting his wishes and purposes, what reason have we to tremble!

"It may be asked, whether I intend by these remarks to represent our country as in a hopeless state. No, my friends. I have held up the *danger* of our country in all its magnitude, only that I may in my humble measure excite that spirit which is necessary, and which by the blessing of Providence may be effectual, to avert it. Alarming as our condition is, there does appear to me to be one method of safety, and only one:—*As a people, we must be brought to see and to feel our danger; we must be excited to a public spirit, an energy, a magnanimity, proportioned to the solemnity of the times in which we are called to act.* If I may be permitted, I would say to the upright, the disinterested, the enlightened friends of their country, that the times demand new and peculiar

exertions. In the present state of the world, there is, under God, but one hope of a people; and that is, their own exalted virtue. This, therefore, should be your object and labour,—to fix the understandings of the people on the calamities that are approaching them; to enlighten the public mind; to improve our moral feelings; to breathe around you an elevated spirit; to fortify as many hearts as possible with the generous purpose to do all which men can do for the preservation of their country. You should labour, not to excite a temporary paroxysm, for the danger is not to be repelled by a few impassioned efforts. We want a calm and solemn apprehension fixed in every mind, that we have everything at stake,—that great sacrifices are to be expected, but that the evils are so tremendous as to justify and require every sacrifice. We want to have a general impression made of the character, spirit, designs, power, and acts of France;—of the unparalleled wretchedness, the political, moral, and religious debasement, attendant on union with her, or on subjection to her power. To effect this end, I have said that new exertions should be made. The common vehicles of political information have done, and may do, much, but cannot do all which is required. Authentic publications *in the names* of our wisest, purest, most venerated citizens should be spread abroad, containing the plain, unexaggerated, uncoloured history of the revolution and domination of France.

" It may be said that the people have all the evidence on this subject already communicated to them. I fear that many have not received sufficiently distinct and connected information from sources on which they rely; and I am confident that many who know the truth need to have the convictions of their understandings converted into active principles, into convictions of the heart. I fear there are many who are blinded to the true character of the conqueror of Europe, by the splendour of his victories; many who attach to him the noble qualities which have been displayed by other heroes, and who repose a secret hope in his *clemency*. They ought to know, and they might know, that he has risen to power in a revolution which has had a peculiar influence in hardening the heart; that his character is unillumined by one ray of beneficence; that he is dark, vindictive, unrelenting; that no man loves him, that he cares for no man's love; that he asks only to be feared, and that fear and horror are the only sentiments he ought to inspire.

"I fear there are many who attach ideas of *happiness* and glory to France, because they hear of the conquests of French armies; and I fear that this impression reconciles them to the thought of union with her. They might know, and they ought to know, *that France is drinking, even to the dregs, that cup of sorrow which she has mingled for other nations.* They should be taught that she is most degraded in her *moral* and *religious* condition, and wretchedly impoverished; that her agriculture, her manufactures, her commercial cities, are falling to decay; that she is ground with oppressive taxes, most oppressively collected; that her youth are torn from their families to fill up the constant ravages which war and disease are making in her armies; that, with all her suffering, she is not permitted the poor privilege of complaining; that her cities, villages, and houses are thronged with spies, to catch and report the murmurs of disaffection. In a word, the people might and should be taught, that social confidence, public spirit, enterprise, cheerful industry, and moral and religious excellence, have almost forsaken that unhappy country.

"On these topics, and on many others which would illustrate the character and tendency of the French domination, might not conviction be carried to some minds at least, and might not many sluggish minds be awakened, if persevering, steady efforts were made by men whose characters would be pledges of their veracity and disinterestedness? Sudden effects might not be produced, and perhaps sudden effects are not to be desired. We do not want a temporary, evanescent ardour, excited for partial purposes and local objects. We want a rational conviction of their great danger fastened on the people, and a steady and generous purpose to resist it by every means which Providence has put within their power. Let me entreat all who are interested in this great object, the improvement and elevation of public sentiment, to adhere to such means only as are worthy that great end; to suppress and condemn appeals to unworthy passions, misrepresentation, and that abuse which depraves public taste and sentiment, and makes a man of a pure mind ashamed of the cause which he feels himself bound to support. Let me also urge you to check the feelings and the expressions of malignity and revenge. Curses, denunciations, and angry invectives, are not the language of that spirit to which I look for the safety of our country. We ought to know that the *malignant passions* of a people are among the powerful instruments by

which the enemy binds them to his yoke. The patriotism which we need is a benevolent, generous, forbearing spirit; too much engrossed with the public welfare to be stung by personal opposition; calm and patient in exhibiting the truth, and tolerant towards those who cannot, or who will not receive it. Let me repeat it; the end we should propose, the elevation of public sentiment and feeling, is not to be secured by violence or passion, but by *truth* from the hearts and lips and pens of men whose lives and characters give it energy.

"But as the most effectual method of exalting the views, purposes, and character of our nation, let me entreat you who are lovers of your country to labour with all your power *to diffuse the faith and practice of the gospel of Christ.* The prevalence of true Christianity is the best defence of a nation, especially at this solemn and eventful period. It will secure to us the blessing of Almighty God; and it will operate more powerfully than any other cause in making us recoil from the embrace of France. No greater repugnance can be conceived than what subsists between the mild, humane, peaceful, righteous, and devout spirit of the gospel, and the impious, aspiring, and rapacious spirit of this new nation. Christianity will, indeed, exclude from our breasts all feelings of ill-will, malice, and revenge towards France and her sovereign; for these are feelings which it never tolerates. But it will inspire a holy abhorrence of her spirit and designs, and will make us shudder at the thought of sinking under her power, or aiding her success.

"But it becomes us to promote Christianity, not only because it will *help to save* our country. We should cherish and diffuse it, because it will be a refuge and consolation, *even should our country fall;* a support which the oppressor cannot take from us. The sincere Christian is not comfortless, even in the darkest and most degenerate times. He knows that oppressive power is but for a moment; and his benevolence is animated by the promise of God, that, even in this world, this scene of cruelty and wretchedness, there will yet be enjoyed the reign of peace, of truth, and holiness under the benignant Saviour."

EXTRACTS FROM A SERMON PREACHED IN BOSTON, JULY 23, 1812, THE DAY OF THE PUBLIC FAST APPOINTED BY THE EXECUTIVE OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST

GREAT BRITAIN. "That we have received no injuries from the nation we have selected as our enemy I do not say; but when I consider the conduct of our own government in relation to the two belligerents,—the partiality and timid submission they have expressed towards the one, the cause of suspicion they have given to the other,—and the spirit in which they have sought reparation from England, I am unable to justify the war in which we have engaged. To render the war justifiable, it is not enough that we have received injuries;—we must ask ourselves, have *we* done our duty to the nation of which we complain? have we taken and kept a strictly impartial position towards her and her enemy? have we not submitted to outrages from her enemy by which he has acquired advantages in the war? have we sought reparation of injuries in a truly pacific spirit? have we insisted only on undoubted rights? have we demanded no unreasonable concessions? These questions must be answered before we decide on the character of the war, and I fear the answer must be against us. . . . . If we have rushed into it when we might have avoided it by an impartial and pacific course, then we have wantonly and by our own fault drawn on ourselves its privations and calamities. Our enemy may, indeed, divide the guilt with us; but on ourselves, as truly as on our enemy, falls the heavy guilt of spreading tumult, slaughter, and misery through the family of God.

"If on the ground of right and justice this war cannot be defended, what shall we say when we come to consider its expediency, its effects on ourselves and the world? It is a war fraught with ruin to our property, our morals, our religion, our independence, our dearest rights,—whilst its influence on other nations, on the common cause of humanity, is most unhappy. . . . . .

"This war is a death-blow to our commerce. The ocean, which nature has spread before us as the field of our enterprise and activity, and from which we have reaped the harvest of our prosperity, is, in effect, forbidden us. Our ships and superfluous produce are to perish on our hands,—our capital to waste away in unproductive inactivity,—our intercourse with all foreign nations is broken off, and the nation with which we sustained the most profitable intercourse is our foe. Need I tell you the distress which this war must spread through the commercial classes of society, and among all whose occupations are connected with com-

merce? How many are there from whom the hard earnings of years are to be wrested by this war, whose active pursuits and cheering prospects of future comfort are exchanged for discouragement, solicitude, and approaching want!

"In addition to this, as our resources are decreasing, the public burdens are growing heavier; and government, after paralysing our industry and closing the channels of our wealth, are about to call on us for new contributions to support the war under which we are sinking. And, to fill up the measure of injury, we are told that this war, so fatal to commerce, so dreaded by the friends of commerce, is carried on for its protection. We are required to believe, that restriction and war, the measures which have drained away the life-blood of our prosperity, are designed to secure our rights on the ocean.

"But loss of property is a small evil attending this war,—its effect on our *character* cannot be calculated. I need not tell you the moral influence of a war which is bringing to a gloomy pause the activity of the community,—which is to fill our streets with labourers destitute of employment,—which is to reduce our young men to idleness,—which will compel a large portion of the community to esteem their own government their worst enemy. Regular industry is the parent of sobriety, and gives strength to all the virtues. A community must be corrupted in proportion as idleness, discontent, and want prevail. We have reason to fear that these temptations will prove too strong for the virtue of common minds,—that, with the decline of commerce, the sense of honour and uprightness in pecuniary transactions will decline,—that fair dealing will be succeeded by fraud,—that civil laws will be treated with contempt,—that habits of dissoluteness and intemperance, already too common, will be awfully multiplied,—that our young men, thrown out of employment and having no field for their restless activity and ardent hopes, will give themselves up to lawless pleasure or immoral pursuits.

"Let me here mention one pursuit which this war will encourage, and which will operate very unhappily on our character. I have said that the ocean will be abandoned. I mistake;—the merchant-vessel will indeed forsake it, but the privateer will take her place. The ocean is no longer to be the field of useful and honest enterprise. We are no longer to traverse it, that we may scatter through the world

the bounties of Providence. Henceforth plunder,—plunder is our only object. We are to issue from our ports, not to meet the armed ship of our enemy,—not to break her naval power,—not to wage a war for public purposes; but we shall go forth to meet the defenceless private merchant, and, with our sword at his breast, we are to demand his property, and to enrich ourselves with his spoils. This pursuit is, indeed, allowed by the law of nations; but Christians, and the friends to public morals, must dread and abhor it, as peculiarly calculated to stamp on a people the character of rapacity and hardness of heart. Yet this is the pursuit, this the character, in which Americans are henceforth to be found on the ocean.

"But all the ruinous effects of this war are not yet unfolded. To see it in its true character, we must consider *against what nation it is waged* and *with what nation it is connecting us.* We have selected for our enemy the nation from which we sprang, and which has long afforded and still offers us a friendly and profitable intercourse,—a nation which has been for ages the stronghold of Protestant Christianity,—which everywhere exhibits temples of religion, institutions of benevolence, nurseries of science, the aids and means of human improvement,—a nation which, with all the corruptions of her government, still enjoys many of the best blessings of civil liberty, and which is now contending for her own independence, and for the independence of other nations, against the oppressor of mankind. When I view my country taking part with the oppressor against that nation which has alone arrested his proud career of victory,—which is now spreading her shield over desolated Portugal and Spain,—which is the chief hope of the civilized world,—I blush,—I mourn. We are linking ourselves with the acknowledged enemy of mankind,—with a government. . . . . which has left not a vestige of liberty where it has extended its blasting sway,—which is at this moment ravaging nations that are chargeable with no crime but hatred of a foreign yoke. Into contact and communion with this bloody nation we are brought by this war,—and what can we gain by building up its power? On this subject too much plainness cannot be used. Let our government know that we deem alliance with France the worst of evils, threatening at once our morals, our liberty, and our religion."*

* The reader who wishes to learn more fully Mr. Channing's views at this eventful period, is referred to the remarks on the "Duties of the Citizen in Times of Trial and Danger." Works, Vol. V., pp. 411–421.

Chap. III. — THE UNITARIAN CONTROVERSY.

Events were now about to summon Mr. Channing from the quiet scenes in which he was earnestly seeking a religious life, to take an active though unwilling part in the Unitarian controversy; and any one who wishes to understand aright his relations to this movement should cast a glance backward, and note the progress of the different influences which then met to intermingle in unpleasant but inevitable conflict. If with a catholic and not sectarian temper we survey the ecclesiastical history of New England, we cannot fail to see, that in this commotion of the spiritual world, as in those which disturb the atmosphere, the elements were but seeking equilibrium, and that modes of thought and feeling which at first seem to run most counter to each other were really different cloud-currents of one storm. Certainly the candid of all parties must admit, that, by means of this agitation, the heaven of piety has become more clear, the air of thought more fresh, the earth of charity more green.

From the middle of the last century onwards, three distinct tendencies may be traced in the minds of the Christians of this country, and, indeed, of Europe also. The first is Spiritualism, devoutly longing for a near communion with the Infinite Being and the heavenly world, manifesting itself in various forms of enthusiasm, and desiring universal sanctification. The second is Philanthropy, demanding a thorough application of the law of love to all the actual relations and practical concerns of life, and animating men to an unprecedented zeal in moral and social reforms. The third is Free Inquiry, seeking a harmony between religion, philosophy, and experience,—between revelation, reason, and common-sense,—and aiming to give such a view of man's destiny upon earth as shall do justice to nature, to history, and to Divine Order. With what was good in each of these tendencies Mr. Channing sympathized and co-operated, while from the extravagances of each he sought to guard himself and others; and the sincere student of his writings cannot but observe with admiration the calm consistency with which he twined his threefold cord of existence. He was from original impulse, by method, and in action, complex and not simple, always reconciling differences by a living synthesis, averse to every kind of partisanship, and each year becoming

more liberal, various, expansive, well balanced. The appropriate motto of his life is HOLINESS, TRUTH, HUMANITY.

Extracts from letters, manuscripts, and publications, at this period, will sufficiently indicate Mr. Channing's position. They are suitably introduced by one in which, at the very close of his career, he has himself reviewed the way whereby Providence had led him up to peace.

"February, 1840.

"I read your communication with much sympathy. Indeed, it carried me back to the earlier stages of my own religious history. Not that I have ever suffered as you have done; but no person can think on the subject of religion without encountering difficulties. Most people owe their freedom from doubts to the absence of thought. As soon as we begin to reflect, we are compelled to call in question a part of our traditionary faith; and the shaking of a part sometimes makes us tremble for the whole. I have spent years of earnest, anxious search for the truth; nor do I repent of my toil. All my toil and solicitude vanish, when I think of the calm faith, the enlargement of views and hopes, in which they have issued.

"You wish to know the history of my mind, but it would fill a volume. My inquiries grew out of the shock given to my moral nature by the popular system of faith which I found prevailing round me in my early years. All my convictions of justice and goodness revolted against the merciless dogmas then commonly taught. I went to the Scriptures, and the blessed light gradually beamed on me from the word of God. I soon learned the great end for which Christ came into the world,—that his first, highest purpose was, not to deliver us from punishment, but from that which deserves punishment, from moral evil, from every impurity of heart and life, from whatever separates us from God; that he came to exert a moral, spiritual influence, by which man was to become a pure, disinterested, excellent being. I soon learned that heaven and hell belong to the mind, that 'the fire and the worm' have their seat in the soul, and that we can attain to the happiness, only by drinking into the spirit of heaven. In other words, I learned that 'the kingdom of heaven is within us,'—that Christianity is eminently a spiritual system, or intended chiefly to redeem the mind from evil,—that we understand its records only when we interpret them according to this principle. One great truth came out to my

apprehension more and more strongly. I felt, I saw, that God is most willing to impart his 'Holy Spirit,' his strength and light, to every man who labours in earnest to overcome evil, to press forward to that perfection which is the only heaven. You will easily see how these views scattered all the darkness into which I had been plunged by a false, traditionary faith. . . . . .

"I beg you to feel that I sympathize with you in your trials. I can say for your encouragement, that the noblest human beings have sometimes passed through similar ones, and have emerged into the light of a calm and happy faith. Be not anxious to make up your mind in a moment. Be assured that God, the good, the just, cannot demand of you assent to what shocks your best feelings. Inquire as you have opportunity. Seek light from above. Especially be faithful to your convictions of duty, and live up to the light you already have, and I am confident that your difficulties, as far as they are mental, will give way."

TO THE HON. WILLIAM ELLERY.

"Boston, March, 1806.

"DEAR AND HONOURED SIR,— . . . . You will see from this that our standard of divinity does not entirely correspond with yours. It is clear that we cannot all be right. The great question, then, offers itself, 'Whether any deviate so far from truth as to be disqualified for receiving the blessings of the gospel, or whether any of the errors of the day necessarily imply a temper opposed to the spirit of the gospel.'

"It seems to be universally granted, that the state of the heart and affections is the great point by which a Christian is to be judged; and that sentiments are no farther important, than as they involve, imply, and cherish a state of heart. Now, can we say of the common errors which prevail in the Christian world, that they cannot co-exist with a penitent, a pious, a benevolent spirit? Unless we can prove a clear repugnance between certain sentiments and the spirit of the gospel,—such a repugnance as forces us to conclude that he who holds these sentiments cannot possess this spirit,—are we authorized to declare the sentiments damnable? An essential doctrine seems to be one which is necessary to the existence of Christian love, and is necessarily implied in this temper. I cannot, therefore, charge a man with damnable heresy, unless I see that his sentiments prove an opposite temper, or,

at least, exclude the exercises of Christian love. If this be just, are we not called to be cautious in judging of the character, while we freely criticize the opinions, of others? May we not love the heart, when we think poorly of the head, of our neighbour?"

TO THE HON. WILLIAM ELLERY.

"Boston, May, 1806.

"DEAR AND HONOURED SIR,—I thank you for your letter, and for the comment which it contains upon our divinity. You complain that our standard is not *particular* enough. But this is the distinguishing feature of our system of liberality. The greater the variety of sentiments with which a system will harmonize, or the fewer its fundamentals, the more worthy it is of liberal minds.

"I conceive these to be the leading principles of modern divinity:—'Practical righteousness is all in all, and every system which embraces motives enough to a good practice is sufficiently correct. *Love* is the fulfilling of the law and of the gospel. All truth is designed to excite this temper, and to form the habits which flow from it, and this is the only test which we fallible mortals can apply to doctrines. We have reason to think there are *good* men in every denomination. Every sect, therefore, embraces sufficient truth for the great end of Christ, the attainment of everlasting life. It does not follow from this, that all systems are equally valuable; for some may tend more to purify the heart than others. But we cannot be certain that any system is wholly inadequate to this all-important end, and we must, therefore, condemn no man, unless his practice be corrupt.'

"The general sentiment which runs through this system, 'that the *temper of the heart* is the one thing needful in order to acceptance with God,' appears to me scriptural. All sects acknowledge that mere speculative assent is of no avail, that it is the *cordial* acceptance of the truth which makes the Christian. If, then, the same state of heart can exist in those who embrace different systems, I should pronounce them equally acceptable to God. This appears to me to be the great question,—'Whether the different systems embraced by professing Christians imply different tempers, principles of action, ends, and affections in those who embrace them; or, in other words, whether any of these systems, from their very nature, prove the absence of the Christian spirit in those by whom they are supported.'

"We find in the Scriptures denunciations against those who do not believe in Christ; but the reason seems to be, that they who reject Christ prove and express by this rejection a corruption of heart. 'Ye are not *of God*, therefore ye hear me not.' In the same way we must make it to appear that the reception of a system can flow only from a corrupt heart, before we exclude those who hold it from Divine favour. It is not so much the reception of one system, or the rejection of another, as the temper of heart implied in this reception or rejection, which affects a man's acceptance with God. If this be true, it seems, that, to judge of the importance of doctrines, we must first form clear conceptions of the peculiar, characteristic, distinguishing spirit and temper which the gospel requires; and doctrines are to be estimated in proportion as they are necessary to this temper, are implied in it, or flow from it.

"I hope I have not wearied you upon this subject. I have lately occasionally made it the subject of reflection, and from the abundance of the head, as well as the heart, the mouth speaketh."

TO THE HON. WILLIAM ELLERY.

"Boston, May, 1807.

"DEAR AND HONOURED SIR,—I conclude from your last letter, that we both agree in thinking that the great effect proposed by God, in the revelation he has made, is the *sanctification of the hearts of mankind*, that a certain *state of heart* is the end for which God exhibits certain objects to our view.

"You justly observe that this sentiment is no ground for indifference to truth, because the system of doctrines contained in the Scriptures must have a greater purifying tendency than any other. But while we acknowledge this, and acknowledge the solemn obligation which it imposes to search the Scriptures with impartiality and zeal, are we authorized to say that he who in any degree departs from the system of Scripture must be a stranger to their purifying influence? Can we say how much of the Scriptures must be received to constitute a man a subject of the promises of Christ?

"You ask, 'if it is not necessary, in order to the love of God and man, that we should entertain just ideas of the moral attributes of God, of the depravity of man, of the

atonement of Christ, and of the influence of the Holy Spirit.' It is certain, that, to love God, some just ideas of him must be formed.' But how little, after all, do we know! And may not mistakes with respect to the moral attributes of God consist with such a spirit as he has promised to bless? With respect to the depravity of man, I think it important that it should be most deeply and painfully felt; for it is hard to conceive of any rectitude of heart in him who is insensible to his transgressions, and it is impossible that he should seek to put away iniquity who does not feel it to be a burden. But while I acknowledge this, I am by no means ready to say that no man can be a Christian who does not believe in the total depravity of human nature. A man may doubt on that subject, yet hate sin. With respect to the atonement of Christ, you know that the highest Calvinists are very much divided on this point. In this State, and in Vermont, several of the strictest of that denomination reject the idea of vicarious suffering and satisfaction, and suppose that Christ's obedience alone has rendered the exercise of Divine mercy toward men consistent and glorious. These persons are embraced by their brethren who hold the more ancient doctrine on this point. Shall we say that error on this point is fatal and irreconcilable with love of God and of man? With respect to the Holy Spirit, few or none deny its influences, but many differ in explaining its mode of operation. Some conceive that the Spirit operates according to certain general fixed rules, that its efficiency is to be expected and sought in the use of means, and that God has connected his agency with means in the spiritual world as constantly as in the natural world. They ascribe all their goodness to God, as the only fountain, on the same principle that they ascribe to him all the blessings of the present state. May not such men possess the love of God and of their neighbour?

"You ask, 'whether the Holy Spirit, in imparting holiness, has no regard to the system of doctrine maintained by the recipient.' I answer, that the Divine Spirit operates by truth; but can we say what number of propositions must exist in the mind as a preparation for those dispositions which constitute the Christian? Or can we say what number of propositions will be assented to, after these dispositions have been produced? In one word, can we draw up a number of propositions, and declare that assent to these is necessarily connected with a Christian character, so that the want

of such assent is a proof that this character does not exist? This is the question which I wish to have resolved. There are doctrines which appear to me important, and suited to the humiliation and sanctification of sinful men. I hear others oppose them. I think these persons suffer by the rejection of such important truth. But they assent to other truths of the greatest magnitude, and appear to feel and live as Christians. Shall I say to such,—'Depart from me, I cannot sit with you at the table of the Lord. You are in the bond of iniquity?' Taught by experience to know my own blindness, shall I speak as if I could not err, and as if they might not in some disputed points be more enlightened than myself?"

FROM THE REV. HENRY CHANNING.

"Canandaigua, February 27th, 1810.

". . . . . I perceive by your letter that the denouncing spirit rages and is confident. Surely no dispassionate man can be at a loss in determining whether it proceeds from the wisdom from above or from beneath. It seems they denounce Boston ministers as deists in *heart* and almost in profession. . . . . .

"You express a wish that I could be with you, as the time may be near when you will need the advice of a serious, experienced friend. It would, indeed, be a pleasure to be so situated that I could often see you, and render you any aid in my power. But I must add that I am satisfied that you stand on the firmest ground, while you 'determine to maintain a good conscience,' and as far as possible 'keep at a distance from dissension.' You justly remark that 'self-defence may oblige the most moderate to take a part in controversies which they would willingly avoid.' It will be your duty to be as bold in asserting your right of judging, and declaring your sentiments, as others are in attempting to control inquiry."

LETTERS TO FRIENDS.

"Boston, February 27th, 1811.

"I was interested by the account you gave of the religious services of Dr. Mason. I have heard him, and know his forcible style of conception and elocution. I can only lament that such powers are not employed in recommending a purer and simpler form of Christianity. Is it not an evidence of the truth of Christianity, that, distorted and disfigured as it

is by so many sects, it still commands assent, and retains its influence over so many minds? The distinction between mysterious doctrines and mysterious facts is rather mysterious to me. Do not think that it is my wish to find faults in one whom you admire. I feel my inferiority to Dr. Mason in talents and acquisitions; but I cannot suffer even a superior to strip my religion of its reasonableness, beauty, and simplicity."

"Boston, December 24th, 1812.

"I have received your letter asking my advice on the subject of a profession of religion, and have read it with very great satisfaction. One of the earnest wishes of my heart is accomplished. My friend, for whom I have so often feared, has consecrated herself to God, and is seeking immortality. I advise you immediately to connect yourself by profession as well as by affection with the body of believers, to bear your testimony to the excellence of your Saviour, and to the truth of his religion.

"The rite of the supper, as Jesus has left it, is as simple as it is affecting. It is only a memorial, a method of impressing the understanding and the heart. It is designed to confirm our faith, hope, love, obedience. The nature of the ordinance decides the qualifications for approaching it. Do you wish to cherish the sentiments which this institution is suited and designed to awaken? Have you that impression of the truth and importance of Christianity which will lead to a serious and beneficial use of this means of improvement? Then are you authorized to approach; for you the table is spread. Let no apprehension of unworthiness deter you. What is there in the view of an affectionate friend suffering for us to repel and alarm us? Could Jesus Christ have placed himself before us in a character more suited to give hope and peace to a mind conscious of its errors and sins?

"I would not, however, advise you to unite yourself with any Christian church, if you are required to subscribe to articles of the truth of which you are not *fully* persuaded; and I beg you not to *force* your mind into the belief of any principles which *human guides* enforce as necessary to communion with the faithful. I confess I have some fears for you on this point. You are living, as I think, in a region of many errors, and your creed, as you formerly gave it to me, is not in my estimation altogether conformed to the simplicity and purity of the gospel. Your ears are familiarized to

sentiments which I cannot hear without shuddering, and which appear to me more dishonourable to the Universal Father than any error born in the darkness of Popery. From the acceptance of these your moral feelings have preserved you; but if you give up the independence and sincerity of your mind to assertion and denunciation, you know not where you may be carried.

"Do not think me uncharitable, because I speak so freely of the doctrines of Calvinism. I truly love and honour many by whom these doctrines are embraced. I cannot easily be a bigot, whilst memory retains what I have recorded on one of her fairest tablets, and what I delight to recollect,—that Popery boasts of a Fénelon, Massillon, Pascal, &c.; Calvinism, of the New England Pilgrims, of Cowper, &c.; Arminianism, of Barrow, Tillotson, Butler, &c.; and Unitarianism, of Newton, Watts, Locke, S. Clarke, Price, Lardner, &c. So much for theology."

"Boston, December 29th, 1812.

"I have spent this evening with our dear ——, and she put into my hands your letter on the subject of religion, to which you referred in the last which I received from you. I read it with sorrow. I saw that your mind was yielding to impressions which I trusted you would repel with instinctive horror. I know that Calvinism is embraced by many excellent people, but I know that on some minds it has the most mournful effects, that it spreads over them an impenetrable gloom, that it generates a spirit of bondage and fear, that it chills the best affections, that it represses virtuous effort, that it sometimes shakes the throne of reason. On susceptible minds the influence of the system is always to be dreaded. If it be believed, I think there is ground for a despondence bordering on insanity. If I, and my beloved friends, and my whole race, have come from the hands of our Creator wholly depraved, irresistibly propense to all evil and averse to all good,—if only a portion are chosen to escape from this miserable state, and if the rest are to be consigned by the Being who gave us our depraved and wretched nature to endless torments in inextinguishable flames,—then I do think that nothing remains but to mourn in anguish of heart; then existence is a curse, and the Creator is ——

"O my merciful Father! I cannot speak of thee in the language which this system would suggest. No! thou hast been too kind to me to deserve this reproach from my lips.

Thou hast created me to be happy; thou callest me to virtue and piety, because in these consists my felicity; and thou wilt demand nothing from me but what thou givest me ability to perform.

"I see with sorrow that you are beginning to depart from the simple and affecting truths which you once cherished. You have become the advocate of an 'inborn corruption' which incapacitates for duty, and yet you think man to be responsible. You even seem to be leaning to the melancholy doctrine, that he may be abandoned to endless misery for not experiencing a change of heart, over which he has little or no control, and which depends entirely on the will of another being. Perhaps I have mistaken your sentiments. Your letter is written in an obscure, mystical style, very different from what distinguishes your ordinary compositions. Your conceptions seem to me loose, unsettled, undefined; but, as far as they have form or substance, they are melancholy and forbidding. I am also deeply grieved to find you talking about persons, who call themselves Christians, and who believe this or that doctrine. My dear friend, let me beseech you to resist the bitter, censorious spirit which like a wasting pestilence has infected the air you breathe. Let us never forget how many purer and wiser minds than ours have viewed Christianity under forms and aspects very different from those which this religion has presented to us.

"You talk of some persons who hope to be saved, 'partly by their own merits and partly by Christ's.' I confess I have not met with this description of Christians; but I can easily conceive that men whose heads are thus confused may still have very good affections. I do know Christians whose hope rests on the *infinite*, *essential*, *unmerited*, and *unpurchased mercy* of God, who think that the freedom and glory of this mercy are diminished by that system which represents it as excited or produced by the merits or vicarious sufferings of another being, and who therefore dislike that unscriptural phrase 'the merits of Christ,' and the common, and as they think unsupported, explications of the atonement. Such Christians, who say nothing about their own worth, and whose fear is that they may throw a stain on the essential mercy and placability of the Father, do not seem to me to err in affections, even though they may in sentiment; and I have found among them some of the most pious and disinterested of human beings.

"Your sweeping conclusion about those 'who do not think the Son equal to the Father' astonished me still more. Can you be ignorant of the scruples of the best minds on this darkest of all doctrines, of the great number of learned and excellent men who have rejected it, and of the many passages of Scripture which *seem* to contradict it, and which may decide a man's opinions whose heart is devoted to God and truth? Let me ask you to read a popular work on this subject, Worcester's Bible News, not so much with the hope that it may influence your judgment, as that it may teach you respect for those who differ from you. Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity, also, will give you some valuable ideas on the nature of faith, a subject which seems to you very obscure, and which Calvinism wraps in tenfold darkness.

"My good friend, if I know myself, I have no *proselyting zeal* about me. I wish only to aid you in recovering the *freedom and independence* of your mind, in order that you may think with calmness and deliberation. . . . . .

"Your sincere friend."

TO THE REV. NOAH WORCESTER.

"Boston, January 11th, 1813.

"Dear Sir,—I have long known you by your writings, and have long wished to express my gratitude to you for the service you have rendered to the cause of truth and free inquiry. But a variety of occupations have prevented.

"I am now led to write you in consequence of the wishes of many in this quarter to establish a work,* in which your aid will be very important. It has long been the opinion of many friends of Scriptural truth, that we need a periodical publication which shall be adapted to the great mass of Christians, and the object of which shall be to increase their zeal and seriousness, to direct their attention to the Scriptures, to furnish them with that degree of Biblical criticism which they are capable of receiving and applying, to illustrate obscure and perverted passages, and, though last not least, to teach them their Christian rights, to awaken a zealous attachment to Christian liberty, to show them the ground of Congregationalism, and to guard them against every enemy who would bring them into bondage.

"Our conviction of the importance of this work has been

* The Christian Disciple.

strengthened by the appearance of a publication in The Panoplist, recommending the immediate erection of ecclesiastical tribunals. After conversing about the best means of attaining the end above described, the general question was, 'To whom shall we commit the superintendence of such a periodical?' and we unanimously concurred in the opinion that you are peculiarly fitted for the office of editing it. . . . . .

"You may expect aid from gentlemen in this town and vicinity. With the sentiments of these gentlemen you are generally acquainted. They are not precisely agreed as to the *person or dignity of Christ*, nor do they wish that the work should be devoted to any particular view of that subject. Whilst they are willing to admit the arguments of all sects, they wish chiefly to exhibit those *relations* and *offices* of Christ which Christians generally acknowledge, and to promote a spirit of forbearance and charity among those who differ in relation to this and other difficult subjects. As to the peculiarities of *Calvinism*, we are opposed to them, without censuring those who embrace those sentiments. We are opposed to that system particularly, inasmuch as it prostrates the independence of the mind, teaches men that they are naturally incapable of discerning religious truth, generates a timid, superstitious dependence on those who profess to have been brought from darkness into light, and so commonly infuses into its professors a censorious and uncharitable spirit.

"You will do us the justice to believe, that in this business we are not actuated by the spirit of *partisans*. We have long given proof of our aversion to contention by bearing patiently and silently the most grave misrepresentations of our characters and sentiments. We have no desire to diffuse any religious peculiarities. Our great desire is to preserve our fellow-Christians from the systematic and unwearied efforts which are making to impose on them a *human creed* and to infuse into them angry and bitter feelings towards those who differ from them. Our great desire is to direct men to the Word of God, and to awaken in those Christians who receive this as their only standard a more devout, serious, earnest, and affectionate piety than they often discover."

"Boston, April 28th, 1815.

"My dear ——, I received your letter of the 21st, and thank you for the confidence in me which it discovers. I am

very much interested in the subject of it, and wish to see as far as possible the operation of religious sentiments in the hearts of others. Your simplicity of character is a proof that I have received a tolerably faithful picture of your feelings. I attach vastly less importance to what you have experienced than you do yourself; but God's providence frequently makes our weaknesses and sufferings the means of our improvement; and I hope that your character will be purified, and your purposes of obedience confirmed, by terrors and emotions which seem to me to imply no supernatural agency.

"Religion, in my view of it, belongs to man as a rational and moral being. It consists of affections, dispositions, and habits voluntarily cherished, and especially founded on just and amiable views of God. The religion which you describe seems to me a tumult of the soul, an involuntary impulse, a triumph of the passions over reason. I think that I respect religion too much to believe that it commonly springs up amidst such disorders, and, I may almost say, ruins, of the rational nature. You seem to me to have yielded yourself up to *terror*, not remembering that this passion, like every other, needs restraint, and that no passion is so apt to pass its bounds and to disorder the mind. The worst superstitions of the heathens originated in terror, and I have no doubt that to this the worst corruptions of Christianity are to be traced. You will grant, my young friend, that, whilst your mind was so powerfully excited by fear, you were not in the best frame for judging correctly of any religious truths. If you have ever seen a man under the influence of a panic, you will recollect that he was in a measure insane, and capable of being led anywhere by a firmer mind. All strong passion has the effect of insanity on the judgment, and makes a man a very different being from what he is in his cooler hours.

"You will permit me in all frankness to say to you, that I see much of human weakness and timidity in your description of your state before you received comfort, a weakness not peculiar to yourself, but at some periods of life experienced by almost every human being. In fact, we are all in some measure children to the end of life, without firmness where we ought to be most deliberate, and governed by passion where we ought to follow most resolutely the dictates of reflection. As to the joy which followed your depression, it was, I apprehend, a very natural effect. The mind, espe-

cially in youth, is soon exhausted by a strong emotion, and is prepared to receive an opposite feeling with peculiar force. Great depression and great joy are often seen to succeed each other. The mind overwhelmed with the thought of danger is equally overwhelmed with transport by the thought of escape. My own temperament is rather equable, but my life is too much made up of successions of feeling. I am sometimes dull and dispirited, and feel as if all my powers and affections were dead. An interesting book, or a religious friend, or other circumstances, will at once awaken me from this low and desponding state, and then a new soul seems kindled within my breast. I have feelings and views so fresh, and tender, and animated, that I hardly appear to myself like the same man. This is the condition of our poor nature; and I have learned to ascribe these changes much more to my physical organization than to any peculiar influences from above. I see and hear of such vicissitudes of feeling as you describe very frequently, especially among the Methodists and Baptists, and I am nowise disposed to ascribe to hypocrisy the narratives given by these persons of sudden transitions from horrid thoughts and deep distress to a state of peace and assurance of God's favour. I learn, however, from the unhappy issue of many of these conversions, that they deserve little confidence, and that there is but one *sure test of piety* which is *an habitual regard to the will of God*, leading us to correct every unchristian disposition, and to cherish all the virtues of the gospel.

"I think your errors may be traced very much to one source,—unjust and unworthy views of God. This is the great spring of corruption in religion. The great controversies in the church may be resolved into one question,—'Is God indeed perfectly good?' To my mind, most of the prevalent theories of religion rest on the supposition that he is *not* good, that his government is dreadfully severe, and that it is the greatest of evils to receive existence from his hand. I do not mean that these sentiments are professed, but they are really involved in the common theories of Christianity, and by being early fixed in our minds they throw a sad darkness over God, over the present and future life, and prepare men for doctrines which hardly yield in gloominess to some of the superstitions of heathenism. Perhaps it is one of the last lessons which many of us learn, that God is truly good; and perhaps the hardest of all reli-

gious duties is to *confide* in his equity and benevolence. The severe views of religion which prevail are thought favourable to piety, very much on the ground that the most rigid monastic institutions were regarded with so much veneration. That these institutions often produced uncommon *strictness* and uncommon *fervour* I do not doubt; but their general influence on the character was not favourable, nor did they promote the great cause of piety.

"You speak of the *creed* you have signed, and justify it on the ground that you ought to show what sense or meaning you give to the Scriptures. When, therefore, you said, 'that there were three persons in one God,' you intended by this to give the *meaning* of certain passages of Scripture which have been variously interpreted, or to show in what manner you *understand* them. Now I object to this article, that it wholly fails of its end, that I cannot conceive *what* you *mean* by it; it brings to my mind but one idea, which I know you cannot intend, that one God is three Gods. In using language for the express purpose of showing what we mean, we cannot be too careful to avoid equivocal words, or unusual meanings of common words. The word *person* you use in a sense which I do not comprehend, and which is wholly unauthorized by common usage. What, then, is gained by forsaking the language of Scripture?

"On reviewing this letter, I find it written in a *manner* which you may possibly misapprehend. There may seem to you a want of tenderness, and a positiveness, which I assure you are far from my heart. I am obliged to write as fast as my pen will run, and in aiming at brevity I have omitted expressions of kindness which my heart would prompt. I have simply wished to guard you against what I deem great errors, and to give you my views of the true spirit of Christianity. I only ask from you calm reflection. I beg that no authority may be given to my sentiments because they are asserted with strength. Confidence is no mark of truth. I wish you to write me with perfect frankness, and to point out what you think my errors. That your character will be improved by the scenes through which you have lately passed is my sincere hope. I shall never love you less for any opposition of sentiment, whilst I discern in your character the badge of a true disciple, which is *love*. As to your entering the ministry, you do well to deliberate. It is a profession to which we should be led by a desire of doing good, and a hope

that we shall be more useful in it than in other pursuits. You will excuse any inaccuracies in so hasty and long a letter.

"Yours, affectionately,
"W. E. CHANNING."

1814. MISTAKES AS TO THE NATURE OF RELIGION.* "Were love to God a transport which we want ability to acquire, and which our nature cannot sustain, our merciful Father would never have required it as our duty. He is perfectly kind and equitable in his injunctions. He proportions his commands to our strength. The love which he requires is a sentiment of gratitude, esteem, and obedience, —such as we are capable of feeling towards an excellent and benevolent father, and such as we are to express in submission to his will, and especially in observance of his commands, and in imitation of his goodness.

"This love, from our very nature, is to be a *gradual, progressive* sentiment. No one expects it in the child in the same force and purity as in the ripened mind of man. It is to grow with our growth, and to be strengthened by daily exercise, daily reflection, daily thanksgiving, and daily prayer; and thus to be exalted to that pure and unremitting fervour with which it glows in the breasts of angels and the spirits of the just made perfect."

1811. FREEDOM OF INQUIRY IN RELIGION. "From the manner in which Christ and his apostles introduced and established the gospel, we learn that they considered religion as a subject on which all men ought to think for themselves, to employ their own minds, to inquire, to deliberate, to fix a serious, impartial attention. It was the wish and intention of the great Founder of our religion, that his religion should be examined, should be received on very different grounds from false religions, should have no support but what it derived from its own excellence, and from the evidences of a Divine interposition by which it was accompanied. . . . . .

"Christianity everywhere considers it as a settled, conceded point, that men, on the subject of religion, are to exercise their own judgment, and to follow their own conviction. I know it is thought by some that this freedom of inquiry in religion is dangerous, especially to the great

* Christian Disciple, Vol. II., No. 10, p. 308.

mass of mankind. It is thought more safe that a few should lead, and that the multitude should follow. It is said, what is common should be admitted as true, that the hereditary faith of men should never be disturbed by suggesting the importance of examination. . . . . .

"It is true that the right of private judgment may be abused. Men, under pretence of thinking for themselves, may renounce the plainest and most important truths, may choose to depart from the multitude, and, to show their boldness and independence, may advance sentiments at which a common mind shrinks with horror. But liberty in every form may be abused. There is but one infallible method we can employ of preventing men from doing evil,—they must be bound hand and foot, and not be suffered to exert one power of body or of mind. Give them a power, and they will sometimes misapply it. Furnish a field of action, and they will sometimes go astray. Invigorate the mind, and they will sometimes employ this vigour in accomplishing unworthy ends. Encourage them to examine before they believe, and they will sometimes practise unfairness, dishonesty of mind, and array error in the garb of truth. But these evils form no balance against the innumerable advantages of a vigorous exertion of the powers we possess; and he who, in order to remove these evils, would restrain men's liberty of thought and action, would rob our nature of everything which ennobles it, and reduce the race almost to the level of brutes. . . . . .

"The opinion is not entirely correct, that inquiry into religion has produced the multiplicity of sects in the Christian world. I would rather say, that the want of examination has often originated and extended them. The readiness of numbers to embrace what is dogmatically and loudly asserted, what addresses the passions instead of the understanding, has been the greatest temptation to the heads of sects to propagate their peculiarities, and furnishes them with followers. The heads of sects have generally their full share of ambition, and their ambition is fostered and made more active by the common disposition which they see to receive their doctrines without examination. We must not imagine that the way to stifle sects is to encourage men to receive religious opinions without thought or inquiry. In a land of universal toleration, this is the most direct way of laying them open to imposition and enthusiasm. *The*

only way of producing uniformity is to encourage serious and honest inquiry.

"This uniformity has sometimes been sought by constraint; but in vain. If, indeed, the power of a state should command one form of religion to be preached, and should prohibit the expression of all others, I grant that something like uniformity would appear. There would be no clamours of contending sects. We should have in their place the silence of the grave. But even in this case there would be no real uniformity of sentiment; for where the activity of the mind is checked on the subject of religion, men can hardly be said to have any sentiments. They may hear, they may receive words, but all their conceptions are vague. They may utter the same sounds, but as far as they attach any distinct meaning to what they say, the probability is that they resemble each other in opinion as little as do now the different sects. Besides, this vassalage of mind cannot for ever be maintained. There is an elastic force in the human understanding which resists this weight of oppression; and when the enslaved world once obtains freedom, and begins to think for itself, it will by reaction become more devious and extravagant in its operation than if no burden had been imposed. Again I say, the only way to produce lasting uniformity of sentiment is to encourage men to think seriously and honestly on religion, to inquire into the grounds of what they believe, to separate the true from the false, and the clear from the obscure.

"It is the influence of such examination to bring truth to light. Truth is not hidden beneath an impenetrable veil, but reveals herself to the sincere inquirer. Men of this character are not easily led away by noisy declamations, by bold assertions, by high pretensions. They soon learn that true wisdom is not characterized by positiveness, and that those who claim most unreserved assent from others deserve it the least. They demand proof, and this is the last demand which enthusiasm is prepared and inclined to answer. They are not carried away by sounds and names. They do not range themselves under a particular banner and denounce war and destruction on all who take a different standard of belief. Claiming for themselves the right of inquiry, and taught by inquiry that they are prone to err, they become more diffident of their own judgment, and lay aside their censoriousness towards others. And if they do

not agree entirely in sentiment with those around them, they still live in peace, and give and receive light; and thus a foundation is laid for real and increasing uniformity of opinion. . . . . .

"This subject is never uninteresting. It is peculiarly important at the time in which we live, when so many opinions divide the religious world, and so many are summoning us with confidence to come over to them, if we would find truth and salvation. In this state of things we are peculiarly called to examine before we approve. Among the various sects into which our community is broken, none can produce any warrant of infallibility, any appointment to the high office of interpreting the word of God for their brethren. Let us not be swayed by names or numbers; let us not give up our understandings to the sway of the positive and dictatorial. Let us seriously inquire into the grounds of our Christian faith, and, having established the great principle that Jesus Christ is the authorised teacher and light of mankind, let us repair to his word, where he speaks to us and to all mankind, and with sincere, honest, humble, impartial minds, desirous to receive and resolved to obey his truth, let us earnestly meditate on his instruction.

"If once we forsake this guide, to whom shall we attach ourselves? If once we choose to rest on human authority, whom shall we select as our teacher out of the multitude who wish to number us among their proselytes? What pledge have we, that we shall not throw ourselves into the arms of the most deluded? Let us, then, stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made us free. Let us receive nothing because positively asserted by others. And neither let us settle down in our own present conceptions, as if they were infallibly right and could not be corrected. Let us avoid equally the desire of singularity and the desire of conformity, and, with dispassionate, unprejudiced minds, follow our Master wherever he shall lead."

1813. HUMILITY IN THE INVESTIGATION OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH.* "A timid and abject spirit, at once unfavourable to truth and degrading to the character, has often been recommended as humility, and been cherished as a virtue on account of the honourable name which it has borne. I wish to consider what is intended by that humility which we ought to

* Christian Disciple, Vol. I., No. 1, p. 18.

carry with us into our inquiries after religion. And for the sake of greater clearness, I will begin with pointing out what this humility does *not* imply.

"1. To search for truth with Christian humility does not imply that we consider ourselves incapable of judging for ourselves, and that we resign our understanding to the guidance of others. This is a humility which aspiring and haughty men very naturally recommend, for it is the great foundation of spiritual dominion. But we ought to be just to ourselves and to the powers which God has given us. We ought to feel that we are rational and moral beings, bound to exert our faculties, and accountable for their improvement. . . . . .

"If, indeed, we were assured that any human being was infallible, we might safely commit to him the keeping of our consciences. But where is this privileged mortal, whose understanding is a region of unclouded light, a temple of truth too holy for the entrance of a single error? Who will dare, in so many words, to claim this exemption from human frailty?

"Some, indeed, talk with great boldness of the perfect assurance which they have attained, as to the truth of the most disputed doctrines. But who are these bold and confident men? Are they distinguished by the patience of their inquiries, the calmness of their minds, the deliberateness of their judgments, the humility and meekness of their tempers? Or are they the precipitate, ardent, vain, and ignorant?

"Some men are sure that they are right on points where the wisest have doubted, because light has flashed upon their minds from heaven. They carry *within* them an indescribable feeling which assures them of the truth of their sentiments. They have received sudden, irresistible impressions, which are worth more than a thousand arguments. Are these the men we are prepared to follow? Then there is no extravagance of sentiment or practice which we must not embrace. There is no absurdity of which some weak enthusiast has not felt the certainty.

"Some men owe their confidence not so much to enthusiasm as to their ignorance. Perhaps nothing produces so much positiveness, as narrowness of views. No difficulties ever strike that mind which looks only at one side of a question. No doubts disturb him who will not inquire.

"If, then, loud claims are not to be believed, how are we

to choose the guide to whom we may resign our understanding? A thousand offer to conduct us to truth and heaven. Whom shall we follow? We must, at least, compare their different systems; and what is this but saying that we must employ our own understandings on religion, that we must judge for ourselves?

"Am I told by some of my readers, that they intend to take for their guides, not enthusiasts or the ignorant, but men of enlarged minds, more favoured than themselves with the power and means of discovering truth? To this the answer is obvious. If men of enlarged minds were united in their views of Christian doctrines, the presumption would be strong in favour of their correctness. But who does not know that on several subjects the wise are divided; that every age has teemed with the controversies of the learned; that great names are ranged under very different standards; that every sect can number among its advocates profound reasoners and laborious inquirers? The fact is, that the most vigorous minds are accessible to error, that the wisest men cannot escape all the prejudices of education, all the biases to which they are exposed from their connexions and pursuits. Great men are often very weak. Some are blinded by attachment to old opinions, which they began to defend before they had examined them. Others are perverted by a passion for novelty, and by the proud hope of raising a name on the ruin of ancient systems. Before we attach authority to another man's opinions, we should not merely ask, Is he intelligent and profound? We should inquire, How was he educated? where has he lived? And especially we should inquire, whether his reputation or interest be not in some degree connected with the sentiments he defends. And after all, how poorly can we judge of the degree of impartiality with which the mind of another has conducted its inquiries after truth!

"But some will say that they choose for their guides, not the learned, but the most *pious* class of Christians, and that they can hardly err in the company of saints. But, my friends, let me ask you, Who has constituted *you* the judges of other men's piety? Are the hearts of men so easily searched, are the marks of goodness so obvious and undoubted, are false professors of piety so easily detected, that you feel no hesitation in deciding to what denomination of Christians the purest piety ought to be ascribed? For myself,

I had much rather be the judge of doctrines than of characters. If you act upon the principle of making the most pious your spiritual guides, you will probably attach yourself to those who make the loudest professions of religion. But are you sure that you will find among these the profoundest humility and the tenderest love of God and Jesus Christ? Do those who make the longest prayers always wear the purest hearts? . . . . .

"I am far from applying the character of the Pharisees to any class of Christians. Whilst every denomination has its hypocrites, there is no one, I trust, which, as a body, is marked by hypocrisy. I only mean to say that loud pretensions and fair appearances are not always to be trusted; that popular opinion may invest with peculiar sanctity the very sect which is most unsound in faith and practice. The purest piety is modest, unobtrusive, retiring. It is often concealed, or discloses itself only to the eye of friendship. It is not ambitious of controlling the opinions of the world, and puts in no claim to obedience from the multitude. How, then, shall we be sure that the class of Christians whom we may select as our guides are the purest who bear the Christian name?

"Another objection may be made to the principle of choosing the pious as our spiritual directors. If we look round on the Christian world with candid and inquiring minds, we shall see marks of the purest piety in every denomination. Every church will exhibit to us its saints. It is a delightful thought, that religion is confined to none of those enclosures of sect and party which are so often the limits of *our* narrow charity. As Protestants, we shrink from the corruptions of the Church of Rome. But what venerable sanctity has adorned many of its members! Who can pronounce the name of Fénelon without thinking better of human nature? Calvinism numbers among its disciples the fathers of new England, men of exalted piety, who breathed the spirit of the early martyrs. On the other hand, who can number the host of worthies who have looked with a shuddering abhorrence on the doctrines of Calvin? Into what perplexities shall we be thrown, into what opposite paths shall we be attracted, if we choose to believe whatever the pious have believed!

"Let us love and respect the good, but let us not lean upon them, as if they could never fall into error. The best

heart is not always guided by the most enlightened mind. Sometimes very conscientious men are weak and timid. They are alarmed by the denunciations of the positive, fear to inquire, and thus yield themselves slaves to gross superstitions. Sometimes very excellent men have more fancy than judgment. They delight in the marvellous, and find hidden meanings in the plainest language of Scripture; they send their thoughts into the spiritual world, and mistake their vivid and pleasing dreams for Divine communications. Where shall we not be led, what absurdity shall we not adopt, if every opinion is to be embraced which has found a place in the minds of the devout? . . . .

"2. To search for truth with Christian humility does not imply that we renounce our reason, and yield our assent to inconsistent or contradictory propositions. A humility of this kind is sometimes urged. We are told that the human mind cannot penetrate the depths of Divine wisdom; that it is pride to bring God's truth to the bar of our reason; that we are to receive the obvious meaning of Scripture, however it may contradict our previous conceptions of truth and rectitude; and that our humility is proportioned to the readiness with which we embrace what shocks our understandings.

"Every man must have met with language like this, not very precise, and not altogether erroneous, but yet adapted to produce unhappy effects, to terrify and subdue the spirit of inquiry, and to prepare men for the reception of any absurdity which is urged on them, as a revelation from God. . . . .

"But because our faculties and improvements are limited, we ought not to expect that we shall ever be called by our Creator to yield assent to doctrines which, after deliberate and impartial attention, clearly appear to contradict one another, or to contradict the truths which God is teaching us by reason and by nature. If our rational powers are among the best gifts of God, if they form, in no small degree, the distinction and glory of our nature, and if it is our duty to employ and improve them, can we expect a revelation which will require us to renounce them, and will introduce into our understandings perplexity and confusion? . . . .

"Let me ask, why is it that a revelation has been made to man, rather than to inferior animals? Is not this the plain an

swer, that man is a rational being? Is not the possession of reason the very ground on which this signal benefit is conferred upon our race? And can we suppose, then, that revelation contradicts reason, that it calls us to renounce the very faculties which prepare us for its reception? . . . . To be Christians we need not cease to be rational. There is no such hostility as many seem to represent between reason and revelation. Revelation addresses its proofs and instructions to reason. Both are God's gifts, both are beams from the same source of light, both are consistent, and both designed to conduct us to perfection and immortality. Let it be remembered that I am speaking of reason, when exercised with seriousness, deliberation, and impartiality. Will any say that this deserves no respect, no confidence? . . . .

"True humility is founded in a conviction of our ignorance, and of our exposure to error; and I now come to consider the influence which this conviction should have on our temper and conduct. In this humility chiefly consists. The mere conviction of our ignorance and fallibility is of little value. Every man in a degree possesses it. Every man will tell you, and tell you with sincerity, that his views are narrow, that he has often erred, that there are many things too vast to be grasped, many too intricate to be traced, and many too subtile to be detected by his imperfect vision. Still all men are not humble. It is one thing to admit a truth, and another to reduce it to practice. Now it is a practical regard to the sentiments which I have endeavoured to illustrate which constitutes humility. We are humble only as far as we possess and discover the dispositions and habits which these sentiments are suited to produce. What, then, are these dispositions and habits?

"1. A strong and operative desire of extending and improving our views of Christian truth may be mentioned as the first disposition which ought to spring from a conviction of our ignorance and fallibility. Do we know little? then we should labour to know more. Of what avail is it to feel our mental wants, if we do not strive to supply them? Of what avail to reflect on the little progress we have made, unless we are induced to quicken our steps? Christians are too apt to think that there is virtue in merely perceiving and lamenting their imperfections. But the humility which stops here is unworthy the name. It may even prove injurious, by weakening the tone of the mind, and rendering it abject and de-

sponding. True humility does not spend its time and strength in brooding with motionless and unavailing grief over its many imperfections. It is a spring of exertion. It teaches us, indeed, to count our present attainments trifling, but not to despise our nature and faculties. Of these we cannot think or speak too highly. They bear the signature of God, the indications of immortality, for they are capable of endless improvement. . . . .

"2. Caution in forming our religious opinions is another habit of mind which a sense of our ignorance and fallibility should lead us to cultivate. . . . . From the present narrowness and imperfections of our minds, our first views are necessarily partial. Our first impressions are never precisely conformed to the truth. We must give ourselves time to penetrate beneath the surface; to remove from a subject what is accidentally associated with it; to survey it on every side; to examine it at different times, in different lights, and in different states of mind; or we must not hope that our decisions will be correct. My friends, beware of precipitate judgments. Patient attention is the price of truth. You know nothing of yourselves, nothing of your mental weakness, if you hope by casual and careless thought to attain to just and enlarged apprehensions. . . . .

"3. A willingness to listen to objections is another most important disposition, to which we are directly led by a serious consideration of our ignorance and exposure to error. This is one of the most decided marks of true humility,—worth more than a thousand loud professions of our unworthiness and imperfections. I would that it were as common as it is just and honourable. . . . . Reluctance to submit your opinions to scrutiny is suspicious. It argues a latent fear of the result of inquiry. It is too often the refuge of conscious weakness, of timid yet stubborn error. Listen patiently to the arguments which are directed against your favourite sentiments. Look at them with a steady eye. Meet them in all their force. Do not examine them with a settled purpose to evade them. Be truth your single aim. Especially be not angry when your opinions are assailed. Many resist opposition to their sentiments as if it were an insult. But why should you consider an honest objector as an enemy? If he attack your errors, he is an invaluable friend; and if he oppose the truth, his good intention still entitles him to respect. To repel objections with passion, betrays both

weakness and pride, and most effectually bars the mind against the entrance of truth.

"This openness to conviction which has now been recommended is one of the noblest virtues. It is infinitely more valuable than learning or genius. It is the foundation of improvement, and the surest defence against error; and yet how many want it! How many hate that light which exposes the weakness of some long-cherished opinions! How many refuse to hear or to read whatever assails their favourite system! How many attach a sanctity to every doctrine they receive, and shrink from doubts, as from undisguised impiety! . . . . .

"4. Modesty in advancing and enforcing our sentiments is another disposition which ought to spring from a sense of our ignorance and fallibility. Surely, it does not become beings so erring as we are to claim submission, to offer ourselves as guides, to impose authoritatively our belief on other minds. . . . . .

"Genuine zeal for truth displays itself in presenting clearly and persuasively to our fellow-beings the evidences of what we deem important truth. It does not storm their minds with denunciation and positive assertion; but only asks to be heard with seriousness and candour, and invites and urges them to think and to judge for themselves. This is the only influence which benevolence and humility permit you to employ over the minds of men. Beware of exerting any other. Beware of wishing to be heads, and to give the hue of your own minds to all around you. This passion for spiritual power is very common, and has done incalculable injury. It has reared and sustained many a fabric of superstition. To accomplish its end, to establish its control over the faith of mankind, it assails the timid with threats, and the credulous with confident assertions. It pours out invective on men of independent minds, and teaches the multitude to recoil from them with instantaneous horror. By these means the most galling yoke is imposed on men. Their understandings are enslaved. They dread to inquire. A tremendous account is to be rendered by those who, instead of being clothed with humility and love, thus lord it over God's heritage, arrest the progress of the mind, and multiply obstructions in the path of truth."

August, 1814. ON THE SINFULNESS OF INFANTS.* "There

* Christian Disciple, Vol. II., No. 8, page 245.

are those whose language respecting children, if it have any meaning, directly affirms their guilt and their desert of ruin. According to some, human nature is sinful, corrupt, depraved at birth. Infants are demons in human shape, objects of God's abhorrence; and, if treated according to their deserts, they would be plunged into hell. . . . . .

"Common sense asks, Why, what has the infant done? He has only drawn a few breaths, and uttered a few unmeaning cries. He is an entire stranger to his nature and state; has not one idea of duty, and has not enjoyed a single means of improvement. Right and wrong, heaven and hell, all the truths and motives of religion, are as unknown to him as to the cradle in which he sleeps. Can sin, guilt, and ill-desert be ascribed to such a being? Can *he* be a sinner, who has never acted, never judged, and never felt anything except a few pains and pleasures of the body?

"A sinful character is that which deserves blame and punishment. But do those qualities which children have received from their Creator, and brought with them into the world,—to which they have added no strength by voluntary indulgence in opposition to their sense of duty, and which they are as unable to prevent as they are to stop the course of the sun in the heavens—do these deserve blame and punishment? It seems one of the clearest truths, that we are responsible only as far as we have power to know and do our duty; that we are depraved and guilty only as far as we indulge passions, or perform actions, which we have the means of resisting or avoiding. . . . . .

"I ask, then, if children were demons fit for hell, would God have given them that attractive sweetness, that mild beauty, which renders them the most interesting objects on earth, and which compels us to shrink with horror from the thought of their everlasting ruin? Let those who support this sad doctrine, contemplate the countenance of infancy, its unfurrowed brow, the smile with which it rewards the caresses of parental affection, and the tranquillity which sleep diffuses over its features. Who has not felt the turbulent passions of his nature calmed by the sight of childhood? And is this winning child, whom God has adorned with charms the most suited to engage the heart, abhorred by God, and fit only for the flames of hell?

"We must always remember that the moral perfections of God, his equity and justice, his benevolence and mercy, are

the great and only grounds on which he claims, or can claim, our veneration and love. These perfections lie at the very foundation of piety. Let these be shaken, and the whole fabric of religion totters. God is the proper object of our love and worship, not because he is a powerful Creator, but a righteous, equitable, and benevolent Creator. We learn from these obvious remarks, that we cannot suspect too strongly a doctrine which, after serious and impartial attention, appears to us to clash with God's moral perfections. Now, let me ask, can we conceive anything more repugnant to justice and benevolence, than the doctrine, that God brings children into existence with a nature deserving his abhorrence, and that he abhors them on account of the very nature which he has given them? How can we ascribe to God a more repulsive and unamiable character? How calamitous would it be to receive existence from such a Creator! We are taught to regard God as infinitely kinder than earthly parents. But with what severity of language should we speak of an earthly parent who should stamp a character of sin on his child, and then regard it with aversion! Is it possible that creatures fresh from the hands of God are at their first breath utterly vile and heirs of his wrath?"

May, 1815. DANGERS OF LIBERALITY.* "It is best, then, to acknowledge with Christian frankness and sincerity, that men of liberal minds have often been defective in fervour; that the spirit of free inquiry has sometimes, if not frequently, produced an indifference about opinions; and that the dread of bigotry and fanaticism has hurried many into the opposite extreme of languor and insensibility. In admitting all this, we do not disparage candour and free inquiry, any more than we disparage a zeal for truth by saying that it has sometimes degenerated into intolerance, and lighted the fires of persecution, or than we condemn religious fervour by saying that it has sometimes, for want of judicious direction, broken out into delirious transports and a blind and furious enthusiasm. The fact is, human nature is prone to extremes. Every principle of action, and every feeling, may pass its proper limits.

"That a man of study and reflection should slide into a moderation of feeling bordering upon coldness, and should distrust and fear the admission of the affections into religion, ought not to excite our wonder. . . . . .

* Christian Disciple, Vol. III., No. 5, page 134.

"When he sees the extravagances of imagination, which in ages of darkness were propagated as communications from God; when he sees the usurpations of the proud, the denunciations of the arrogant, and the frauds imposed on the credulous multitude by those who pretended to extraordinary sanctity; when, in a word, he sees human systems, the growth of gloomy or heated minds, taking the place of the mild and simple doctrines of Christianity, rending whole kingdoms with dissension, embittering social life, quickening and arming the worst passions of our nature, and even promising the highest seats in heaven to the most unrelenting and uncharitable; when the reflecting man reviews these melancholy scenes in the history of the Church, can we wonder if, from dread of extravagance and from distrust of the affections, he should fall into a habit of cold speculation, and should prefer a religion which, retiring from the heart, resides only in the understanding?

"The affections are not useless parts of our nature, but on their just direction our excellence and happiness peculiarly depend. The affections give to the character its principal charm and interest. We delight to see the heart awakened by a pure emotion. . . . . .

"Is affection an improper tribute to be offered to God? His whole character is an appeal to our affections. His character is the concentration of all that is lovely and venerable; and in his relation of Father, Benefactor, and Sovereign, how powerful are his claims on the best sentiments of our nature!

"It is of great importance that religion should be an affection of the heart, as well as a conviction of the understanding; because it is to govern in a soul which is agitated by various passions, which is powerfully solicited by the world, and which is prone to contract a sensual taint and a sordid character. These strong and dangerous propensities of human nature are not to be counteracted by mere speculations of the intellect. The heart must be engaged on the side of God and duty. To subdue the love of the world, a nobler love must be kindled within us. A new and better channel must be formed for that desire which we would turn from unworthy ends. We cannot, if we would, extinguish the affections. Our safety consists in directing their force and energy to noble and elevated objects,—to God, to virtue, and to immortality.

"Religious sensibility is of great importance, as it gives animation and delight to the obedience of all God's commands,—to the practice even of painful duties. Sensibility, affection, communicates an almost incredible force to human nature. Where men love strongly, what toils and sacrifices can they endure! how lightened is labour! how cheerful is suffering! A warm affection seems almost to create new faculties in the soul. It spreads a new lustre over the countenance, and seems even to nerve the body with new power. Men have never done much when the heart has been cold; and what have they not done, what have they not subdued, when the heart has been quickened to generous emotions? To rob religion of sensibility is to make it inert and unproductive,—to render obedience to God a toil, and his worship a mechanical and wearisome service.

"Let us, then, beware of that tendency to coldness which has been charged on Liberal Christians. Their views of religion have certainly nothing to chill the heart, but everything to raise it into love and hope. Their views might well be distrusted, were they unfavourable to an affectionate piety; and, what is more, their cause might be given up in despair, did it require the extinction of sensibility. Human nature will never be satisfied with a system which does not awaken sentiment and emotion. Man has a thirst for excitement, he delights in the exercise of his affections, and his Creator can hardly be supposed to give him a religion which contradicts this essential part of his nature."

August, 1815. PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.* "Christianity, we must always remember, is a temper and a spirit, rather than a doctrine. It is the life of God in the soul of man. It consists of practical truths, designed to enlarge the heart, to exalt the character, to make us partakers of a divine nature. Now in the Epistles of St. Paul we have Christianity displayed to us in the very form which accords with the genius of such a religion,—not as a speculation of the intellect, but as a living principle, a sentiment of the heart, a spring of holy action. We see its nature in the influences which it exerts. We see a soul penetrated with love to God, with a disinterested charity, with anticipations of a higher existence, with a consciousness of guilt, with gratitude to the Saviour, and with an inextinguishable desire to make known his love and promises to the ends of the earth.

* Christian Disciple, Vol. III., No. 8, page 236.

These sentiments break forth as from a heart too full to contain them, with an energy which discovers the mighty power of the religion which gave them birth, and with a freedom which no other style but the epistolary would have admitted. We cannot but consider the letters of Paul, with all their abrupt transitions and occasional obscurities, as more striking exhibitions of genuine Christianity than could have been transmitted by the most laboured and artificial compositions. . . . . .

"The connexion between faith and practice seems to be considered by some as mysterious, or as the effect of some inexplicable union, which is formed by faith between Jesus Christ and the human soul. But this subject seems to be very simple. Faith is the sincere and practical reception of the whole religion of Jesus, and particularly a strong persuasion of that future life which is offered to us through Jesus Christ; it is a deep conviction of practical truths, that is, of truths suited to operate on the human heart, and to *excite to action*. To have a true faith is to feel deeply the most powerful motives which can be offered to a life of piety and virtue. The connexion between faith and holiness, then, is natural and palpable, and involved in no obscurity."

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER, ETC., TO THE REV. SAMUEL C. THACHER.

"June 20th, 1815.

"My Friend and Brother,—I have recollected with much satisfaction the conversation which we held the other morning, on the subject of the late Review, in the 'Panoplist' for June, of a pamphlet called 'American Unitarianism.' . . . . . After leaving you, my thoughts still dwelt on the subject; and, painful as is the task, I have thought it my duty to exhibit to the public the topics which we discussed, as well as to add some reflections suggested by private meditation.

"I bring to the subject a feeling which I cannot well express in words, but which you can easily understand. It is a feeling as if I were degrading myself by noticing the false and injurious charges contained in this Review. I feel as if I were admitting that we need vindication, that our reputations want support, that our characters and lives do not speak for themselves. My self-respect, too, is wounded, by coming into contact with assailants who not only deny us the name

of Christians, but withhold from us the treatment of gentlemen. These feelings, united with my love of peace, would induce me to pass over the Review in silence, if it were limited to the sphere within which we are personally known. In this sphere, I trust, its bitterness, coarseness, and misrepresentations will work their own cure; and that no other defence is required, but the tenour of our ministry and lives. But the work in which this article is published is industriously spread through the country, and through all classes of society. The aspersions which it contains are also diffused, as widely as possible, by conversation, and even by newspapers. We owe, then, to ourselves, and, what is more important, to the cause of Christian truth and charity, some remarks on the representations and spirit of the Review. . . .

"The Panopolist Review, though extended over so many pages, may be compressed into a very narrow space. It asserts,—

"1. That the great body of Liberal ministers in this town and its vicinity, and of Liberal Christians, are Unitarians in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word; that is, they believe that Jesus Christ is a mere man, who when on earth was liable to error and sin; to whom we owe no gratitude for benefits which we are now receiving; and for whose future interposition we have no reason to hope.

"2. The Review asserts that these ministers and Liberal Christians are guilty of hypocritical concealment of their sentiments, and behave in a base, cowardly, and hypocritical manner.

"3. Christians are called to come out and separate themselves from these ministers and the Liberal body of Christians, and to withhold from them Christian communion.

"I will consider these three heads in their order.

"The first assertion to be considered is, that the great body of Liberal ministers in this town and vicinity, and of Liberal Christians,* are Unitarians, in Mr. Belsham's sense of that word. . . . . It is unnecessary to multiply extracts to

* "I have used the phrase or denomination *Liberal Christians* because it is employed by the Reviewer to distinguish those whom he assails. I have never been inclined to claim this appellation for myself or my friends, because, as the word *liberality* expresses the noblest qualities of the human mind,—freedom from local prejudices and narrow feelings, the enlargement of the views and affections,—I have thought that the assumption of it would savour of that spirit which has attempted to limit the words *orthodox* and

show, that not only Boston, but its vicinity, is involved in the charge. In fact, the Liberal party, in general, is ranged under the standard of Mr. Belsham. Now we both of us know this statement to be false. . . . . .

"The word *Unitarianism*, as denoting opposition to Trinitarianism, undoubtedly expresses the character of a considerable part of the ministers of this town and its vicinity, and the Commonwealth. But we both of us know that their Unitarianism is of a very different kind from that of Mr. Belsham. We agreed in our late conference, that a majority of our brethren believe that Jesus Christ is more than man, that he existed before the world, that he literally came from heaven to save our race, that he sustains other offices than those of a teacher and witness to the truth, and that he still acts for our benefit, and is our intercessor with the Father. This we agreed to be the prevalent sentiment of our brethren. There is another class of Liberal Christians, who, whilst they reject the distinction of three persons in God, are yet unable to pass a definite judgment on the various systems which prevail, as to the nature and rank of Jesus Christ. They are met by difficulties on every side, and generally rest in

evangelical to a particular body of Christians. As the appellation, however, cannot well be avoided, I will state the meaning which I attach to it.

"By a Liberal Christian, I understand one who is disposed to receive as his brethren in Christ all who, in the judgment of charity, sincerely profess to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Master. He rejects all tests or standards of Christian faith and of Christian character, but the word of Jesus Christ and of his inspired apostles. He thinks it an act of disloyalty to his master to introduce into the church creeds of fallible men as bonds of union, or terms of Christian fellowship. He calls himself by no name derived from human leaders, disclaims all exclusive connexion with any sect or party, professes himself a member of the Church Universal on earth and in heaven, and cheerfully extends the hand of brotherhood to every man of every name who discovers the spirit of Jesus Christ.

"According to this view of Liberal Christians, they cannot be called a party. They are distinguished only by refusing to separate themselves in any form or degree from the great body of Christ. They are scattered, too, through all classes of Christians. I have known Trinitarians and Calvinists who justly deserve the name of Liberal, who regard with affection all who appear to follow Jesus Christ in temper and life, however they may differ on the common points of theological controversy. To this class of Christians, which is scattered over the earth, and which I trust has never been extinct in any age, I profess and desire to belong. God send them prosperity!—In this part of the country, Liberal Christians, as they have been above described, are generally, though by no means universally, Unitarians, in the proper sense of that word. It is of this part of them that I chiefly speak in this letter."

the conclusion, that He whom God has appointed to be our Saviour must be precisely adapted to his work, and that acceptable faith consists in regarding and following him as our Lord, Teacher, and Saviour; without deciding on his nature or rank in the universe. There is another class, who believe the simple humanity of Jesus Christ; but these form a small proportion of the great body of Unitarians in this part of our country; and I very much doubt whether of these one individual can be found, who could conscientiously subscribe to Mr. Belsham's creed as given in the Review. The conduct of the Reviewer, in collecting all the opinions of that gentleman, not only on the Trinity, but on every other theological subject, in giving to the *whole* collection the name of *Unitarianism*, and in exhibiting this to the world as the creed of Liberal Christians in this region, is perhaps as criminal an instance of unfairness as is to be found in the records of theological controversy. The fact is, that the great body of Liberal Christians would shrink from some of these opinions with as much aversion as from some of the gloomy doctrines of Calvin. . . . . .

"I trust that the statement which has now been made will not be considered as casting the least reproach on those amongst us, who believe in the simple humanity of Jesus Christ. Whilst I differ from them in opinion, I have certainly no disposition to deny them the name and privileges of Christians. There are gentlemen of this class, whom I have the happiness to know, in whom I discover the evidences of a scrupulous uprightness and a genuine piety; and there are others, whose characters, as portrayed by their biographers, appear to me striking examples of the best influences of Christianity. . . . . .

"I now come to the second charge of the Review: That the liberal ministers of Boston and the vicinity, and the most considerable members of the liberal party, 'operate in secret; intrust only the initiated with their measures; are guilty of hypocritical concealment of their sentiments; behave in a base and hypocritical manner.' . . . . . This charge is infinitely more serious than the first. To believe with Mr. Belsham is no crime. But artifice, plotting, hypocrisy, *are* crimes; and if we practise them, we deserve to be driven, not only from the ministry, not only from the Church, but from the society of the decent and respectable. Our own hearts, I trust, tell us at once how gross are these aspersions;

and our acquaintance with our brethren authorizes us to speak in their vindication with the same confidence as in our own.

"It is not to be wondered at, that those who have charged us with holding sentiments which we reject should proceed to charge us with hypocritically concealing our sentiments. Most of us have often contradicted Mr. Belsham's opinions; and they who insist that these opinions are ours will be forced to maintain that we practise deceit. They start with a falsehood, and their conclusion cannot therefore be true. I am not, however, disposed to dismiss this charge of artifice and hypocrisy so lightly . . . . . As to myself, I have ever been inclined to cherish the most exalted views of Jesus Christ which are consistent with the supremacy of the Father; and I have felt it my duty to depart from Mr. Belsham in perhaps every sentiment which is peculiar to him on this subject. I have always been pleased with some of the sentiments of Dr. Watts on the intimate and peculiar union between the Father and Son. But I have always abstained most scrupulously from every expression which could be construed into an acknowledgment of the Trinity. My worship and sentiments have been Unitarian, in the proper sense of that word. In conversation with my people, who have requested my opinion upon the subject, especially with those who consider themselves Trinitarians, I have spoken with directness and simplicity. Some of those who differ from me most widely, have received from me the most explicit assurances of my disbelief of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of my views in relation to the Saviour. As to my brethren in general, never have I imagined for a moment, from their preaching or conversation, that they had the least desire to be considered as Trinitarians; nor have I ever heard from them any views of God or of Jesus Christ but Unitarian, in the proper meaning of that word.

"It is indeed true, that we seldom or never introduce the Trinitarian controversy into our pulpits. We are accustomed to speak of the Father as the only living and true God, and of Jesus Christ as his son, as a distinct being from him, as dependent on him, subordinate to him, and deriving all from him. This phraseology pervades all our prayers and all our preaching. We seldom or never, however, refer to any different sentiments, embraced by other Christians, on the nature of God or of Jesus Christ. We preach precisely as

if no such doctrine as the Trinity had ever been known. We do not attempt to refute it, any more than to refute the systems of the Sabellians, the Eutychians, or the Nestorians, or of the other sects who have debated these questions with such hot and unprofitable zeal. But, in following this course, we are not conscious of having contracted, in the least degree, the guilt of insincerity. We have aimed at making no false impression. We have only followed a general system, which we are persuaded to be best for our people and for the cause of Christianity; the system of excluding controversy as much as possible from our pulpits. In compliance with this system, I have never assailed Trinitarianism; nor have I ever said one word against Methodism, Quakerism, Episcopalianism, or the denomination of Baptists; and I may add Popery, if I except a few occasional remarks on the intolerance of that system. The name of these sects, with that single exception, has never passed my lips in preaching, through my whole ministry, which has continued above twelve years. We all of us think it best *to preach the truth*, or what we esteem to be the truth, and to say very little about error, unless it be error of a strictly *practical* nature. A striking proof of our sentiments and habits on this subject may be derived from the manner in which you and myself have treated Calvinism. We consider the errors which relate to Christ's person as of little or no importance, compared with the error of those who teach that God brings us into life wholly depraved and wholly helpless, that he leaves multitudes without that aid which is indispensably necessary to their repentance, and then plunges them into everlasting burnings and unspeakable torture for not repenting. This we consider as one of the most injurious errors which ever darkened the Christian world; and none will pretend that we have anything to fear from exposing this error to our people. On the contrary, we could hardly select a more popular topic; and yet our hearers will bear witness how seldom we introduce this topic into our preaching. The name of Calvinist has never, I presume, been uttered by us in the pulpit. Our method is, to state what we conceive to be more honourable, and ennobling, and encouraging views of God's character and government, and to leave these to have their effect, without holding up other Christians to censure or contempt. We could, if we were to make strenuous efforts, render the name of Calvinist as much a word of reproach in our societies, as that of Unitarian is in some parts

of our country. But we esteem it a solemn duty to disarm, instead of exciting, the bad passions of our people. We wish to promote among them a spirit of universal charity. We wish to make them condemn their own bad practices, rather than the erroneous speculations of their neighbour. We love them too sincerely to imbue them with the spirit of controversy.

"In thus avoiding controversy, we have thought that we deserved, not reproach, but some degree of praise for our self-denial. Every preacher knows how much easier it is to write a controversial than a practical discourse; how much easier it is to interest an audience by attacking an opposite party, than by stating to them the duties and motives of the gospel. We often feel that our mode of preaching exposes us to the danger of being trite and dull; and I presume we have often been tempted to gratify the love of disputation which lurks in every society. But so deeply are we convinced that the great end of preaching is to promote a spirit of love, a sober, righteous, and godly life, and that every doctrine is to be urged simply and exclusively for this end, that we have sacrificed our ease, and have chosen to be less striking preachers, rather than to enter the lists of controversy.

"We have seldom or never assailed the scheme of the Trinity, not only from our dislike to controversy in general, but from a persuasion that this discussion would, above all others, perplex, and needlessly perplex, a common congregation, consisting of persons of all ages, capacities, degrees of improvement, and conditions in society. This doctrine we all regard as the most unintelligible about which Christians have ever disputed. If it do not mean that there are three Gods (a construction which its advocates indignantly repel), we know not what it means; and we have not thought that we should edify common hearers by attacking a doctrine altogether inconceivable, and wholly beyond the grasp of our faculties. We have recollected, too, the mischiefs of the Trinitarian controversy in past ages, that it has been a firebrand lighting the flames of persecution, and kindling infernal passions in the breasts of Christians; and we have felt no disposition to interest the feelings of our congregation in a dispute which has so disgraced the professed disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus. Many of us have been disinclined, not only to assail systems which we do not believe, but even to enforce the

views which we have given of the rank and character of Jesus Christ; because we have known how divided the best men have been on these topics, and how largely we ourselves partake of the fallibility of our nature; because we have wished that our hearers should derive their impressions on these points as much as possible from the Scriptures; and because we have all been persuaded that precision of views upon these subjects is in no degree essential to the faith or practice of a Christian. We have considered the introduction of the Trinitarian controversy into the pulpit as the less necessary, because we have generally found that common Christians admit that distinction between God and his Son, and that subordination of the Son, which we believe to be the truth; and as to that very small part of our hearers who are strongly attached to the doctrine of the Trinity, while we have not wished to conceal from them our difference of opinion, we have been fully satisfied that the most effectual method of promoting their holiness and salvation, was to urge on them perpetually those great truths and precepts about which there is little contention, and which have an immediate bearing on the temper and the life. To conclude, we have never entered into discussions of the doctrine of the Trinity, because we are not governed by a proselyting temper. I will venture to assert, that there is not on earth a body of men who possess less of the spirit of proselytism than the ministers of this town and vicinity. Accustomed as we are to see genuine piety in all classes of Christians, in Trinitarians and Unitarians, in Calvinists and Arminians, in Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, and Congregationalists, and delighting in this character wherever it appears, we are little anxious to bring men over to our peculiar opinions. I could smile at the idea of a Unitarian plot, were not this fiction intended to answer so unworthy an end. There cannot be a doubt, that, had we seriously united for the purpose of spreading Unitarianism by any and every means, by secret insinuations against those who differ from us, by uncharitable denunciations, and by the other usual arts of sects, we might have produced in this part of the country a Unitarian heat and bitterness not inferior to that with which Trinitarianism is too often advocated. But not the slightest whisper of any concert for this end has ever reached me; and as to these arts, our people can best say how far we have practised them. Our people will testify how little we have sought to influence

them on the topics of dispute among Christians, how little we have laboured to make them partisans, how constantly we have besought them to look with candour on other denominations, and to delight in all the marks which others exhibit of piety and goodness. Our great and constant object has been to promote the *spirit of Christ*, and we have been persuaded that in this way we should most effectually promote the interests of Christian *truth*. . . . .

"I now come to the third head of the Review, which I propose to consider. The Reviewer, having charged us with holding the opinions of Mr. Belsham, and hypocritically concealing them, solemnly calls on Christians who differ from us in sentiment 'to come out and be separate from us, and to withhold communion with us.' . . . . This language does not astonish me, when I recollect the cry of heresy which has been so loudly raised against this part of the country. But I believe that this is the first instance in which Christians have been deliberately called to deny us the Christian name and privileges. As such, let it be remembered; and let the consequences of it lie on its authors.

"Why is it that our brethren are thus instigated to cut us off, as far as they have power, from the body and church of Christ? Let every Christian weigh well the answer. It is not because we refuse to acknowledge Jesus Christ as our Lord and Master; it is not because we neglect to study his word; it is not because our lives are wanting in the spirit and virtues of his gospel. It is because, after serious investigation, we cannot find in the Scriptures, and cannot adopt as instructions of our Master, certain doctrines which have divided the Church for ages, which have perplexed the best and wisest men, and which are very differently conceived even by those who profess to receive them. It is, in particular, because we cannot adopt the language of our brethren in relation to a doctrine which we cannot understand, and which is expressed in words not only unauthorized by the Scripture, but, as we believe, in words employed without meaning (unless they mean that there are three Gods) by those who insist upon them. This is our crime, that we cannot think and speak with our brethren on subjects the most difficult and perplexing on which the human mind was ever engaged. For this we are pursued with the cry of heresy, and are to have no rest until virtually excommunicated by our brethren. . . . . .

"Most earnestly do I wish that the Dissertation of Dr. Campbell on Heresy, in his Translation of the Four Gospels, was more generally read and considered. He has proved, I think, very satisfactorily, that heresy, as the word is used in the Scriptures, does not consist in the adoption or profession of wrong opinions, but in a spirit of division, of dissension, of party, in a factious and turbulent temper; and that the heretic is not a man who entertains erroneous or even injurious sentiments, but one who loves to be called Rabbi and master; who has a disposition to separate Christians, to create or to extend sects and parties. . . . . Let Christians weigh well the nature and guilt of schism, the consequences of separation, and the spirit of their religion, before they adopt the measure recommended in this Review. For myself, the universe would not tempt me to bear a part in this work of dividing Christ's church, and of denouncing his followers. If there be an act which, above all others, is a transgression of the Christian law, it is this. . . . . I know it will be said that Christians are not called upon to reject real Christians, but heretics and false pretenders to the name. But heresy, we have seen, is not a false opinion, but a sectarian spirit; and as to false pretences, we desire those who know us to put their hands on their hearts, and to say whether they can for a moment believe that we hypocritically profess to follow the instructions of Jesus Christ. Does charity discover nothing in our language and lives to justify the hope that we are united to Jesus Christ by love for his character, and by participation of his spirit? . . . . .

"I wish that my motives for these earnest remonstrances against division may be understood. I feel as little personal interest in the subject as any individual in the community. Were the proposed separation to take place, I should still enjoy the ordinances of the gospel in the society of those whom I best love. The excommunication which is threatened gives me no alarm. I hear this angry thunder murmur at a distance, with as little concern as if it were the thunder of the Pope, from whom it seems, indeed, to be borrowed. But whilst I fear nothing for myself, I do fear and feel for that body of which Christ is the head, which has been bleeding for ages under the contests of Christians, and which is now threatened with a new wound. I feel for the cause of our common Christianity, which I am set to defend, and which has suffered inconceivably more from the bad passions

and divisions of its friends than from all the arts and violence of its foes. I cannot but look forward with pain to the irritations, hatreds, bitter recriminations, censoriousness, spiritual pride, and schismatical spirit which will grow up under this system of denunciation and exclusion, and which may not only convulse many churches at the present moment, but will probably end in most unhappy divisions among the very Christians who denounce us; who seem indeed to be united, now that a common enemy is to be trodden under foot, but who have sufficient diversities of opinion to awaken against each other all the fury of intolerance, when this shall have become the temper and habit of their minds. I repeat it, I have no interest in this point but as a Christian; and as such, I look with a degree of horror on this attempt to inflame and distract our churches. Error of opinion is an evil too trifling to be named, in comparison with this practical departure from the gospel, with this proud, censorious, overbearing temper, which says to a large body of Christians, 'Stand off, we are holier than you.' . . . . .

"Having thus considered the three principal heads in the Review, I now proceed to offer a few words of friendly admonition, as to the temper and conduct which become our brethren and ourselves, under the injuries which we receive.

"The first suggestion you have undoubtedly anticipated. It is, that we remember the great duty which belongs to us as Christians, of regarding our enemies with good-will, if possible with a degree of approbation, at least with displeasure tempered with compassion. . . . . As to the great mass of those Christians who view us with so much jealousy, we must remember that they know us only by report, that they believe as they are taught by men to whom they ascribe an eminent sanctity, and that they are liable to be carried away on this, as on every other subject, by loud assertion, and by addresses to their fears. Accustomed as they are to hear us branded with names and epithets, to which they have attached no definite ideas, but which seem to them to express everything depraved, can we wonder that they shrink from us with a kind of terror? To this great class of our opposers we certainly owe nothing but kindness; and we should esteem it an unspeakable happiness, that we can look with so much pleasure and hope on those by whom we are dreaded and shunned; that we are not obliged by our system to regard *our* adversaries as the enemies of God, and the ob-

jects of his wrath. On this point, above all others, I would be urgent. Our danger is, that reproach will hurry us into language or conduct unbecoming the spirit of our Master. Let us remember that our opposers cannot ultimately injure us, unless we permit them to awaken bad passions, and to impair our virtues. Let us remember what is due from us to our religion. The more uncharitable our age is, the more the glory of the gospel is obscured by its being exhibited as a source of censoriousness and contention, the more we owe it to our Lord to wipe off this reproach from his truth, to show the loveliness of his religion, to show its power in changing the heart into the image of divine forbearance and forgiveness. . . . . .

"Another important suggestion is this:—Let us hold fast our uprightness. . . . . That our churches are to be generally shaken by the assault which is made upon them, I am far from believing. But some may suffer. It is not impossible that the efforts which are now employed to direct against us the uncharitableness and mistaken zeal of the country, and to spread disaffection through the most uninstructed and the most easily excited classes of society, may produce some effect. We know the fluctuations of the human mind. We know that the sincerest Christians are often unduly influenced by timidity, and may be brought to suspect a minister, when he is decried as a heretic who is leading souls to hell. It requires more strength of nerves and more independence of mind than all good people possess to withstand this incessant clamour. A storm, then, may be gathering over some of us, and the sufferers may be tempted to bend to it. But God forbid, my friend, that any of us should give support to the aspersions cast on our uprightness, by ever suppressing our convictions, or speaking a language foreign to our hearts. Through good report and through evil report, let us with simplicity and sincerity declare what we believe to be the will of God and the way to heaven, and thus secure to ourselves that peace of conscience which is infinitely better than the smiles of the world. Let us never forget that the most honoured condition on earth is that of being sufferers for the sake of righteousness, for adherence to what we deem the cause of God and holiness; and let us welcome suffering, if it shall be appointed us, as bringing us nearer to our persecuted Lord and his injured apostles. My brother, we profess to count man's judgment as a light thing, to esteem this

world and all which it offers to be vanity. We profess to look up to a heavenly inheritance, and to hope that we shall one day mingle with angels and just men made perfect. And with these sublime hopes, shall we tremble before frail and fallible fellow-creatures, be depressed by difficulties, or shrink from the expression of what we deem important and useful truth? God forbid!

"I have time to add but one more suggestion. Let us beware lest opposition and reproach lead any of us into a sectarian attachment to our peculiar opinions. This is a danger to which persons of ardent and irritable temper are peculiarly exposed. Too many of us are apt to cling to a system in proportion as it is assailed, to consider ourselves pledged to doctrines which we have openly espoused, to rally round them as if our own honour and interest were at stake, and to assert them with more and more positiveness, as if we were incapable of error. This is the infirmity of our frail nature; and whilst we condemn it in others, let us not allow it in ourselves. Let us be what we profess to be, patient inquirers after truth, open to conviction, willing to listen to objections, willing to renounce error, willing to believe that we, as well as others, may have been warped in our opinions by education and situation, and that others may have acquired important truths which, through weakness or prejudice, we may have overlooked. Were we a party, anxious to make proselytes, we should do well to be positive and overbearing. But we profess to be anxious that our fellow-Christians should inquire for themselves into the difficulties of religion, instead of implicitly receiving what we have embraced. We profess to believe that candid and impartial research will guide mankind to a purer system of Christianity than is now to be found in any church or country under heaven. Most earnestly do I hope that we shall not be betrayed by any violence of assault into a sectarian heat and obstinacy, which will discredit our profession, and obstruct this glorious reformation of the Church of God."

EXTRACTS FROM REMARKS ON THE REV. DR. WORCESTER'S LETTER TO MR. CHANNING.

August, 1815. "By the advice of friends whose judgment I respect, I have resolved to offer to the public some remarks on the letter of Dr. Worcester in reply to mine addressed to

Mr. Thacher. They will be few in number, and as free as possible from personalities. . . . . .

"My letter to Mr. Thacher is considered by Dr. Worcester as bitter and severe; but, called as I was to repel the charge of immorality brought against men whose virtue and piety I know and honour, and to whom I am bound by ties of friendship and Christian affection, I felt it a solemn duty to express what I deemed a virtuous indignation. I laboured, however, to temper displeasure with Christian moderation; and, on finishing my letter, my fear was, not that I had expressed an improper warmth, but that I should be considered as wanting in sensibility to the injuries done to some of the best men in this community. I know, however, the many weaknesses and imperfections of my nature. I may have erred, for the provocation was great; and I sincerely repeat the declaration with which I closed my letter, that for every departure from the spirit of the gospel I implore the Divine forgiveness. . . . . .

"One great object of Dr. Worcester's letter, if I understand him, is to convey to his readers the impression, that the mode of preaching of Liberal ministers is 'concealed, indistinct, and unfaithful.' This he attempts to prove, first, from the statement which I made of the views of Liberal Christians in relation to the character of Jesus Christ. This statement, he says, is ambiguous. That it is general, that it does not descend to particulars, I grant; but I deny that it is ambiguous, if considered, as it ought to be, in relation to the object for which it was made. It was simply designed to repel the charge of the reviewer, that we are Unitarians in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word. Was it necessary that in such a statement every question should be met and answered, which might possibly be started in relation to our sentiments? . . . . .

"The next proof of our preaching in a 'concealed, indistinct, and unfaithful manner' is derived from the account which I have given of our general style of preaching. . . . . My statement was plainly this:—that we labour to preach the truth, to preach whatever we clearly discover in the word of God; but that, in doing this, we generally avoid references to opinions which we do not receive, and never hold up those Christians who differ from us to censure or contempt. According to this statement, we evidently preach the whole counsel of God, as far as we understand it. But Dr. Wor-

cester, passing over this account, has selected a passage in which I observe that 'we urge perpetually those great *truths* and *precepts* about which there is little contention, and which have an immediate bearing on the temper and life.' From this passage he infers that we can urge none of the 'primary and peculiar doctrines and institutions of the gospel, because about all these there has been great contention.' To this I answer, first, that I have never understood that there has been much contention about the 'great *precepts*' of the gospel, not even about those which have been most habitually disregarded. Christians, satisfied with dismissing these from their lives, have retained them in their systems. Even the bitterest persecutors in the Church have never disputed the precepts of 'loving their neighbour as themselves,' and of 'doing to others as they would have others do to them.' . . . . It may next be observed, that the common disputes about the 'great *doctrines*' of the gospel have not related so much to their truth and importance, as to some inferior points connected with them. For example, there has been much debate about the benevolence of God, whether it forms his whole moral character and his highest spring of action, or whether it be subordinate to wisdom or rectitude; but all parties have agreed that God is benevolent. In the same manner, many have disputed about the omnipresence of God, whether his substance be extended through infinite space, or whether he be present only by his knowledge and power to every portion of space; but all have agreed that God is omnipresent. In like manner, Christians have disputed about the precise way in which Christ's death has an influence on our forgiveness; but that it has a real and important influence on forgiveness almost all unite in asserting. Once more, Christians have never been weary with disputing on the mode and extent of spiritual influences; but, with very few exceptions, all maintain that these influences are real, and are promised to our prayers. Let no one, then, say, that we preach no primary or peculiar doctrines of Christianity, because we insist perpetually on principles in which the different classes of Christians generally concur. Such principles, we sincerely believe, form the very substance and glory of the gospel. They shine with a clear and unsullied splendour. We are deeply impressed with their truth, their supreme importance, and their sufficiency to salvation; and therefore we urge them with unwearied importunity, with zeal and affection.

"It is possible that Dr. Worcester will go on to object, that, according to this very account, our preaching must be extremely general, vague, wanting in precision, and therefore unfaithful. The answer is short. If we are indeed general and vague in our representation of the truths of the gospel, it is *because we are faithful*, because we dare not be precise above what is written, because we stop where the Scriptures seem to us to stop, and because we have a very deep and sorrowful persuasion that our religion has been exceedingly defaced and corrupted by the bold attempts of theologians to give minute explanations of its general truths, and to cramp it with the fetters of systematic precision. We tell our hearers, that God sent his Son to die for us, exalted him to be our Prince and Saviour, and ordained him to be Judge of the quick and dead, and never think it necessary or faithful to fill up the outline of Scripture, by adding, that the Son who was sent was the very God who sent him, or by speculating on the infinite evil of sin, and on the necessity of an infinite atonement, in order to illustrate the fitness of such a mediator. Thus, then, we preach. Whether our preaching be nothing more than the inculcation of 'natural religion,' let our hearers determine.

"Dr. Worcester asks, if the 'apostles avoided controversy,' and never 'attempted to refute error,' &c. We think the answer very obvious. In the first place, we wonder that any can confound the situation of ministers in a Christian country, where the gospel has long been known and acknowledged, with the situation of the apostles, who preached a new religion which the multitude derided and opposed, and which their new and ignorant converts were continually corrupting with Jewish and heathen mixtures. We sincerely believe that the great principles for which the apostles contended are now received with little dispute in Christian communities, and we conceive that the great business of a minister is to urge those truths in their primitive simplicity on the hearts and consciences of men, instead of making them subjects of controversy.

"There is another important remark on this point. We do not pass sentence like apostles on many subjects of controversy among Christians, for this very plain reason,—that we are *not* apostles. We are, what we labour never to forget, uninspired and fallible men; and we are apt to distrust ourselves, when persons of intelligence and piety see cause to

differ from us in the interpretation of Scripture. We dare not preach like apostles on points which have perplexed and divided men of the profoundest thought and the purest lives; and we know from the genius and leading principles of Christianity, that these points are not, and cannot be, essential to salvation. We dare not imitate the bold and positive language in which the darkest doctrines are sometimes urged as undoubted and essential, and in which the sentence of excommunication is pronounced on serious inquirers after truth, by some who discover no superiority of intellect or virtue. . . . . .

"It is urged, that our sentiments lead us into an entire indifference to Christian truth; that we believe all error to be innocent; that we consider belief in the truth as no virtue; and that we thus set aside those passages of Scripture in which the highest importance is attached to this belief. This objection is founded on our extending the name and privileges of Christians to the lowest Unitarians, who hold some sentiments from which, as I stated, we generally shrink with aversion. Now I deny that any indifference to truth, or any contempt of those passages which enjoin belief of the truth, is implied in this extension of our charity. . . . . The *faith* to which salvation is promised in Scripture seems to us to reside in the heart much more than in the understanding. The true believer is distinguished, not by clearness and extent of views, but by a 'love of light,' a 'love of the truth,' originating in a sincere desire to 'do the will of God.' . . . . .

"This love of divine truth, this honest, unprejudiced, obedient mind, we highly venerate, and always enjoin as essential to salvation. But we know that this love of truth is consistent with the reception of many errors. We know that the apostles, during the life of their Master, possessed this temper in a sufficient degree to constitute them his followers, and yet they grossly misunderstood some of his plainest and most important declarations. We believe, too, that, at the present day, many in every Christian country are placed in circumstances almost, if not quite, as unfavourable to a clear understanding of the gospel, as the apostles were under the ministry of Jesus. From considerations of this nature, from a knowledge of the amazing power of education and other circumstances, over the opinions of every mind, and from a fear that we, as well as others, may have been swayed and blinded by unsuspected infelicities attending our

condition, we are very unwilling to decide on the degree of truth which is required for the salvation of every individual, or to say that the errors of an apparently sincere professor of Christianity are inconsistent with a pious character. In our judgment of professed Christians, we are guided more by their temper and lives than by any peculiarities of opinion. We lay it down as a great and indisputable principle, clear as the sun at noonday, that the great end for which Christian truth is revealed is the sanctification of the soul, the formation of the Christian character; and wherever we see the marks of this character displayed in a professed disciple of Jesus, we hope, and rejoice to hope, that he has received all the truth which is necessary to his salvation. Acting on this rule, we cannot exclude from the Church the lowest Unitarians who profess subjection to Jesus Christ. Of this class we have known or heard of individuals who have breathed the genuine spirit of their Master; who have discovered a singular conscientiousness in all the walks of life; whose charity has overflowed in good deeds; whose wills have been resigned in affliction; and who lived as seeking a better country, even a heavenly. Such men we have not dared to exclude from the Christian Church, on the ground of what seem to us great errors, any more than to exclude the disciples of Calvin; whose errors we also deeply lament, but whose errors are often concealed from us by the brightness of their Christian virtues.

"We are not conscious that by this liberality we at all oppose those passages of Scripture in which great stress is laid upon belief of the truth; for we are convinced, from laborious research into the Scriptures, that the great truth which is the object of Christian belief, and which in the first age conferred the character of disciples on all who received it, is simply this, that *Jesus is the Christ*, or anointed by God to be the light and Saviour of the world. Whenever this great truth appears to us to be sincerely acknowledged, whenever a man of apparent uprightness declares to us his reception of Jesus in this character, and his corresponding purpose to study and obey his religion, we feel ourselves bound to give him the hand of Christian fellowship, and to leave it to the final Judge to determine how far he is faithful in searching after the will of his Lord. This duty of searching, and of searching with humility and with a single and fearless regard to truth, we constantly inculcate; and

we sincerely believe that in this way we approve ourselves friends of truth much more decidedly than if we should aim to terrify and prostrate the minds of our hearers by threatening them with everlasting misery, unless they receive the peculiar views of the gospel which we have seen fit to espouse. . . . . .

"The principal argument which Dr. Worcester offers in favour of the proposed separation of Trinitarians and Unitarians, is the great differences between them. I sincerely regret that these differences are so studiously magnified, whilst the points of agreement between these classes of Christians are as studiously overlooked. Dr. Watts and Dr. Doddridge have left us a better example. Trinitarians and Unitarians both believe in one God, one infinite and self-existent mind. According to the first, this God is three persons; according to the last, he is one person. Ought this difference, which relates to the obscurest of all subjects, to the essence and metaphysical nature of God, and which common Christians cannot understand, to divide and alienate those who ascribe to this one God the same perfections, who praise him for the same blessings, who hope from his mercy the same forgiveness, who receive on his authority the same commands, and who labour to maintain the same spirit of devotion to his will and glory? According to Trinitarians, Jesus, who suffered and died on the cross, is a derived being, *personally* united with the self-existent God. According to the Unitarians, he is a derived being, *intimately* united with the self-existent God. Ought this difference, which transcends the conception of common Christians, to divide and alienate those who love the same excellent character in Jesus Christ, who desire to breathe his spirit and follow his steps, who confide in him as perfectly adapted to the work which he was sent to accomplish, and who labour to derive just conceptions of his nature from his own instructions? The differences between Trinitarians and Unitarians are very often verbal. As soon as Trinitarians attempt to show the consistency of their doctrine of three persons with the Divine unity, their peculiarities begin to vanish, and in many of their writings little or nothing is left but one God acting in three characters, or sustaining three relations, and intimately united with his son Jesus Christ. Ought distinctions so subtile and perplexing to separate those who love the same Divine character, and respect the same Divine will?

"Dr. Worcester, however, seems disposed to widen the breach between these classes of believers. He says, the Saviour 'whom you acknowledge is infinitely inferior to ours.' I answer, we believe that God saves us by his son Jesus Christ, in whom he dwells, and through whom he bestows pardon and eternal life. A higher Saviour we do not know, and cannot conceive. But Dr. Worcester does not stop here. He says, 'The God whom you worship is different from ours.' To this I answer, as others have answered before, that I with my brethren worship 'the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, who hath glorified his son Jesus,' whom Peter preached. (Acts iii.) We worship 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' to whom Paul 'bowed the knee.' We worship that God whom Jesus in his last moments worshipped, when he said, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' We worship that God to whom our Lord directed us, when he put into our lips these affecting words, 'Our Father who art in heaven.' We worship that God of whom our Master spoke in these memorable words—'The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.' Dr. Worcester speaks of a different God; but we can renounce ours for no other. This worship we are persuaded is a spring of purity, joy, and hope; and we trust that it will prove to us a source of unfailing consolation amidst the trials, reproaches, and rude assaults of the world. But I must stop. The points of dispute between Unitarians and Trinitarians cannot be treated with any fairness within the narrow compass of a pamphlet, and I wish not to discuss them in connexion with the present controversy, which primarily relates to the *moral character* of the great body of Liberal Christians.

"Dr. Worcester has laboured to show, that charity, instead of forbidding, encourages and requires Trinitarians to exclude Unitarians from Christian fellowship, because charity commands us to promote truth, and truth is promoted by this system of exclusion. But let me ask, Why is truth to be promoted? Not for its own sake, but for its influence on the heart, its influence in forming a Christian temper. In what, then, does this temper consist? very much in candour, forbearance, and kind affection. It follows, that any method of promoting truth which is unfriendly to these virtues, is unchristian; it sacrifices the end to the means of religion. Now let me ask, whether the practice of rejecting as ungodly

men those who differ from us on subtile, perplexing, and almost (if not altogether) unintelligible doctrines, be not obviously and directly opposed to the exercise and diffusion of candour, forbearance, kind affection, and peace. Has it not actually convulsed the church for ages with discord and war? The right of denouncing those who differ on such doctrines, if granted to one Christian, must be granted to all; and do we need the spirit of prophecy to foretel the consequences, if the ignorant, passionate, and enthusiastic, who form the majority of every community, shall undertake to carry this right into practice? The idea, that a religion which is designed for weak and fallible mortals of all classes and capacities, and which is designed to promote unity, peace, candour, and love, should yet make it our duty to reject, as wholly destitute of goodness, every man, however uniform in conduct, who cannot see as we do on points where we ourselves see little or nothing, appears to me the grossest contradiction and absurdity. If this be Christianity, we may say anything of our religion more truly, than that it is a religion of peace. A more effectual instrument of discord was never devised. Charity, then, does not command the Trinitarian to exclude his Unitarian brother. Charity commands us to use mildness and persuasion; to open our eyes to the marks of virtue in those from whom we differ; to beware of ascribing error to a corrupt heart, unless the proof be striking; to think modestly of ourselves, and to drive from our minds the conceit of infallibility, that most dangerous error which ever crept into the Church of Christ."*

* "I cannot forbear earnestly desiring Christians to obtain, if possible, some accurate ideas of the most important point in the present controversy. Let them learn the distinction between Trinitarianism and Unitarianism. Many use these words without meaning, and are very zealous about sounds. Some suppose that Trinitarianism consists in believing in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But we all believe in these; we all believe that the *Father* sent the *Son*, and gives, to those that ask, the *Holy Spirit*. We are all Trinitarians, if this belief is Trinitarianism. But it is not. The Trinitarian believes that the one God is *three distinct persons*, called Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and he believes that each of these persons is equal to the other two in every perfection, that each is the only true God, and yet that the three are only one God. This is Trinitarianism. The Unitarian believes that there is but one person possessing supreme Divinity, even the Father. This is the great distinction; let it be kept steadily in view. Some Christians have still more vague ideas on this subject. They suppose that Trinitarians think highly of Jesus Christ, whilst Unitarians form low ideas of him, hardly ranking him above common men, and therefore they choose to be Trinitarians. This is a great error:

EXTRACTS FROM REMARKS ON THE REV. DR. WORCESTER'S SECOND LETTER TO MR. CHANNING.

November, 1815. "As far as I understand the prevalent sentiments among liberal Christians in this quarter of our country, they appear to me substantially to agree with the views of Dr. Samuel Clarke and the author of Bible News; and were we required to select human leaders in religion, I believe that we should range ourselves under their standard in preference to any other.

"Dr. Clarke believed that the FATHER ALONE is the Supreme God, and that Jesus Christ is not the Supreme God, but derived his being and all his power and honours from the Father, even from an act of the Father's power and will. He maintains, that, as the Scriptures have not taught us the manner in which the Son derived his existence from his Father, it is presumptuous to affirm that the Son was created, or that there was a time when he did not exist. On these subjects the word of God has not given us light, and therefore we ought to be silent. The author of Bible News in like manner affirms that the Father only is the Supreme God, that Jesus is a distinct being from God, and that he derives everything from his Father. He has some views relating to the 'proper Sonship' of God, which neither Liberal nor 'Orthodox' Christians generally embrace. But the prevalent sentiments of Liberal Christians seem to me to accord substantially with the systems I have above described. Like Dr. Clarke, the majority of this class feel that the Scrip-

Some Unitarians believe that the Father is so intimately united with Jesus Christ, that it is proper, on account of this union, to ascribe Divine honour and titles to Jesus Christ. Some Unitarians deny that Jesus is a creature, and affirm that he is properly the Son of God, possessing a Divine nature derived from the Father. Some Unitarians, who assert that Jesus is a creature, maintain that he is literally the first-born of the creation, the first production of God, the instrumental cause by whom God created all other beings, and the most exalted being in the universe, with the single exception of the Infinite Father. I am persuaded that under these classes of high Unitarians many Christians ought to be ranked who call themselves Orthodox and Trinitarians. In fact, as the word *Trinity* is sometimes used, we all believe it. It is time that this word was better defined. Christians ought not to be separated by a sound. A doctrine which we are called to believe, as we value our souls and our standing in the Church, ought to be stated with a precision which cannot be misunderstood. By the Trinity, I have all along understood the doctrine, that *God is three persons*.

tures have not taught the mode of Christ's derivation. They, therefore, do not call Christ a creature, but leave the subject in the obscurity in which they find it, carrying with them, however, an impression that the Scriptures ascribe to Jesus the character of Son of God in a peculiarly high sense, and in a sense in which it is ascribed to no other being.

"With respect to the ATONEMENT, the great body of Liberal Christians seem to me to accord precisely with the author of Bible News, or rather both agree very much with the profound Butler. Both agree that Jesus Christ, by his sufferings and intercession, obtains forgiveness for sinful men; or that, on account, or in consequence, of what Christ has done and suffered, the punishment of sin is averted from the penitent, and blessings forfeited by sin are bestowed. It is, indeed, very true, that Unitarians say nothing about *infinite* atonement, and they shudder when they hear that the ever-blessed God suffered and died on the cross. They reject these representations, because they find not one passage in Scripture which directly asserts them or gives them support. Not *one* word do we hear from Christ or his apostles of an *infinite* atonement. In not *one* solitary text is the efficacy of Christ's death in obtaining forgiveness ascribed to his being the supreme God. All this is theology of man's making, and strongly marked with the hand of its author. But the doctrine of the Atonement, taken in the broad sense which I have before stated, is not rejected by Unitarians. On the question, which is often asked, How the death of Christ has this blessed influence, they generally think that the Scriptures have given us little light, and that it is the part of wisdom to accept the kind appointment of God, without constructing theories for which the materials must be chiefly borrowed from our own imagination.

"My motive for making the preceding statement is no other than a desire to contribute whatever may be in my power to the peace of our churches. I have hoped, that, by this representation, some portion of the charity which has been expressed towards Dr. Clarke and the author of Bible News may be extended towards other Unitarians; and that thus the ecclesiastical division which is threatened may be averted. Let it not, however, be imagined, that I or my friends are anxious *on our own account* to extort from the 'Orthodox' an acknowledgment, that possibly we hold the true gospel, and are not 'devoid of Christian faith and virtue.

We regard other Christians as brethren, but can in no degree recognise them as superiors in the Church of our common Master. We do not dread the censures which they may pass on our honest opinions. We rejoice that we have a higher judge, whose truth it is our labour to learn, obey, and maintain, and whose favour will be distributed by other principles than those which prevail in a prejudiced and short-sighted world. But, whilst we mean not to be suitors to our brethren, we are willing and desirous, by any fair representations, to save them from a course which, as we firmly believe, will be injurious to their own characters, unjust to their fellow-Christians, unfriendly to the diffusion of the gospel, and highly offensive to our benevolent Master. Most happy should I be, if, by any honourable concessions on our part, our churches could be preserved from the shock which threatens them. . . . .

"It is intimated that *we* 'dread a development.' We respect many of our opponents, but we *dread* none. Our love of peace, they may be assured, has another origin than fear or selfish views. It is from deep conviction that I have stated once and again, that the differences between Unitarians and Trinitarians lie more in sounds than in ideas; that a barbarous phraseology is the chief wall of partition between these classes of Christians; and that, would Trinitarians tell us what they mean, their system would generally be found little else than a mystical form of the Unitarian doctrine. These two classes of Christians appear to me to concur in receiving the most interesting and practical truths of the gospel. Both believe in one God of infinite perfection; and we must remember that it is this perfection of God, and not his unknown substance, which is the proper object of the Christian's love. Both believe in the great doctrine, that eternal life is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ. Both learn from the lips and life of Jesus the same great principles of duty, the same exalted views of human perfection, and the same path to immortality. I could easily extend these points of agreement. And what are the questions which divide them? Why, these :—First, Whether the One God be three distinct subsistences,* or three persons, or three '*somewhats*'† *called persons,* as Dr. Worcester says, for want of a 'better

* "Wardlaw."

† "This word has been used by Trinitarians in writing and conversation."

word'; and, secondly, Whether one of these three subsistences, or improperly called persons, formed a personal union with a human soul, so that the Infinite Mind, and a human mind, each possessing its own distinct consciousness, became a *complex person.* Such are the points, or rather phrases, of difference between these Christians. And ought phrases like these—of which we find not a trace in the Bible, which cannot be defined by those who employ them, which convey to common minds no more meaning than words of an unknown tongue, and which present to the learned only flitting shadows of thought, instead of clear and steady conceptions —to separate those who are united in the great principles which I have stated? Trinitarians, indeed, are apt to suppose themselves at an immeasurable distance from Unitarians. The reason, I think, is, that they are surrounded with a mist of obscure phraseology. Were this mist dispersed, I believe that they would be surprised at discovering their proximity to the Unitarians, and would learn that they had been wasting their hostility on a band of friends and brothers."*

June, 1818. WHAT IS RELIGION ?† "We may answer in general, that religion consists in a moral resemblance of God,—in a willing, a chosen, a conscientious, and habitual conformity to his commands, as our supreme rule of life, and our highest happiness,—in supreme love of God,—in doing to others as we would that others should do to us,— and in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world. The seat of religion is the heart; and this emphatically is the will of God, even our sanctification; a separation of our hearts, our wills, and affections to his service. All besides this, which belongs to religion, comes under the denomination either of *means* or of *motives.* Let us endeavour clearly to understand this distinction, that we may ever use the means and motives of religion with a steady view to its infinitely important *end;* and in that end seek, where alone we can find it, the true and eternal good of our souls. . . . . .

"I said that the seat of religion is the heart. From the abundance of the heart, or according to its moral state, we think, and feel, and speak, and act. Love to God and love to our neighbour form, therefore, the *essence* of religion;

* For a yet fuller statement of Mr. Channing's views at this period, the reader is referred to the remarks on "The System of Exclusion and Denunciation in Religion," Works, Vol. V., pp. 373–391.

† Christian Disciple, Vol. VI., No. 6, page 161.

because, in proportion to their prevalence in the heart, they will produce a conformity of all our thoughts and words, our feelings and actions, to the will of God; they will subdue every passion and appetite to the dominion of his law; they will make his approbation absolutely essential to the peace of our hearts; they will make it the very life of our happiness. But let us comprehend the commandment, for it is exceeding broad. We cannot love God till we know him. Religion comprehends, therefore, a knowledge of God. In proportion to our love of God will be our confidence in him, our entire satisfaction with the courses and designs of his providence, whether we understand them or not, and our resignation to his will. If we love him, we shall earnestly desire and endeavour to be like him; we shall do whatever we know or believe will please him; we shall avoid whatever we have reason to believe that he cannot approve. If we so love God, we shall feel also a Christian love of one another; for the greatest obstacles to the exercise of this love, of the active and universal charity of the gospel, will then be overcome in our hearts. We shall feel a love which not only worketh no ill to our neighbour, but all practical good,—a love that can bear and forbear, that hopeth all things and endureth all things, that can return blessings for curses, and prayers for injuries,—in fine, a love which will excite us in all circumstances to do to others as we would that others should do to us. To be religious, therefore, is to be wholly conformed to the will of God; it is to have in ourselves the mind that was in Christ; it is to possess the will, the temper, and affections of Christians. . . . . .

"What, then, is the connexion between Religion and its Doctrines and Rites?

"I answer:—1. The *doctrines* of religion comprehend all that we are taught of the character, government, and purposes of God, of the person and offices of our Lord, of our moral nature and capacities in this world, of the happiness of the good and the misery of the wicked in the life to come. These doctrines are addressed to our faith; and it is obvious that simply to believe them will not make us religious. How, then, are they conducive to this end? Reflect on them but for a moment, and you will perceive that in these doctrines are comprehended all the *motives* by which the gospel excites us to a godly, a sober, and a righteous life. As motives, it is immediately apparent how very important they are to the

great and infinitely momentous purposes for which God has revealed them. . . . . .

"But they will save us only by conducing to the end for which they were given. Even as the body without the spirit is dead, so is faith in these and all the doctrines of religion, unless productive of a Christian temper, of good works, of obedience to God, dead also.

"2. Still more plain is the true relation between the *rites* of religion and religion itself. No positive institutions could, indeed, be more expressive, more appropriate, than are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. And yet, separated from the ends of their appointment, what tendency has their observance to make us more acceptable to God? . . . . .

"We can scarcely exaggerate the importance of these ordinances as *means* of religion. But, unless they conduce to the ends for which they were intended, they will avail us nothing.

"I will only add two inferences:—1. The means of religion may be changed in conformity with the circumstances of those for whose use they are appointed. But *religion itself can never change.* Like God, it is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. . . . . 2. Is religion itself for ever essentially the same? Does it consist in an unreserved devotion of the heart, the passions, will, and affections, to God; in a choice of God as our supreme good, and a ready obedience to his will, from a *principle of love?* Then let us value and improve the means, with a faithful reference to their infinitely important end."

September, 1816. CHRISTIAN UNION. "The guilt of a *sectarian spirit* is but little understood, or it would not be so often and inconsiderately incurred. To bestow our affections on those who are ranged under the same human leader, or who belong to the same church with ourselves, and to withhold it from others who possess equal if not superior virtue, because they bear a different name, is to prefer a party to the Church of Christ. Still more, to look with an unfriendly, jealous eye on the improvements and graces of other denominations, is one of the most decided acts of hostility to Jesus Christ which his disciples have power to commit; for the virtue towards which they thus cherish and express dislike is the image of Christ, the promotion of which is the highest end of his life, of his death, and of his mediation at the right hand of God.

"I speak not this to the reproach of one class of Christians rather than of another. All have reason for deep humiliation. All have been infected with this accursed leaven of party spirit. Few Christians, it is to be feared, look on the virtues and attainments of other denominations with equal pleasure as on those of their own. Few do entire justice to those who differ from them. It is to be hoped, however, that in this respect a real improvement is spreading through Christendom. The partition walls are beginning to fall. The fires of persecution are going out.

"This union of Christians is the brightest feature, the distinguishing glory of our age. Let it be extended, and our religion will have free course through the earth. A new face will then be given to the world. Hitherto the strength of Christians has been spent in mutual conflict. The force of the kingdom of Christ has been wasted in civil war. Let Christians of every name and every region feel and respect the holy bond of brotherhood; let their prayers and labours be united for the diffusion, not of sectarian peculiarities, but of that genuine Christianity which all hold in common; let a co-operation as extensive as the Christian world be formed to diffuse it and make it practically efficient.

"Let churches lay down their arms and love one another, and nations will begin to learn war no more. Let Christians of different countries embrace one another as brethren, let them co-operate in schemes of general utility to the Church and to mankind, and they will shudder at the thought of breaking this sacred union. Peace, universal peace, will be then their constant prayer."

1817. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY. "It was by asserting their right to the free use of the Scriptures, and to private judgment, that the Reformers laid the foundation of that purer state of religion in which we now rejoice. Let these rights never be wrested from us. Let us hold them dearer than all civil immunities. Better have our persons and property than our minds subjected to a despot.

"Is it said, that this jealousy is no longer needed in Protestant countries, that faith and conscience are here left free? We certainly have reason to thank God for the enjoyment of greater religious liberty than was ever possessed before. The fire of persecution is quenched; the Scriptures are in every man's hand. But still, to read the Scriptures with independent minds, requires no little effort. There are still

obstructions to the privilege of judging for ourselves. The spirit of popery did not expire among our ancestors with its forms. Human nature and its ruling passions are always the same. The same love of power, the same desire to lead, the same wish to dictate to the consciences of others, which burned in the breasts of the Romish clergy, and built up the Romish hierarchy, still subsist and operate among us. There is still, and always will be, until man is more exalted by Christianity, a conspiracy against the religious as well as the civil rights of men. In Protestant countries there are those who are impatient of contradiction, who wish to impose their views on others, who surround their creeds with similar terrors to those made use of by the Papal church, and doom to destruction all who have the temerity to differ from their opinions. And what is yet more melancholy, in Protestant countries are multitudes who, awed by great names and loud denunciations, want courage to inquire for themselves, fear to doubt what positive men and popular opinion pronounce sacred, take the name of a human leader whom they dread to desert, and adopt as their standard not so much the Scriptures as the interpretation of confident fellow-beings, who condemn all but themselves and their servile adherents. To this timid spirit we owe the worst corruptions of Christianity in earlier times, and it is this which still obscures the glory of our religion.

"Remember, my friends, that the great doctrine of the Reformation was this—that Jesus Christ is the only infallible teacher of his church, and that to him, as he speaks in his word, and not to human guides, we are all bound to listen. It is the character of the consistent Protestant, and of the enlightened Christian, that he calls no man master, and bows his faith and conscience to no human tribunal. He is not intimidated by positive assertion, anathemas, and cries of heresy. He goes to no infallible head, whether at Rome, Geneva, or Wittemberg; borrows no creed from Trent or Westminster; takes no name from Luther, Calvin, or Arminius; intrenches himself behind no traditions of forefathers and ancient saints. He, indeed, avails himself of the lights and arguments of good and great men of present and former times. But Jesus is the only *authority* to whom he submits.

"Every church in Christendom has its errors; and perhaps errors which to future ages may seem as gross as many earlier superstitions appear to the present generation. In reading

scripture impartially, we may be compelled to dissent from opinions which are embraced by multitudes with an excess of zeal. In this case our path is plain. Let us be meek, but bold, professors of truth. Let us all adhere with firmness to what we deliberately and solemnly believe to be the truth of God. Let us not shrink from its defence because it is persecuted, because it is unpopular, because it may expose us to an evil name. Truth should be dearer to us than reputation. We must remember that it has seldom made its way without exposing its professors to suffering and reproach; and in the reproach of our Master we should be willing to share.

"This right to consult and judge for himself of God's word is our neighbour's as well as our own. Whilst we claim it for ourselves, let us not deny it to others. Let us give what we ask. Let us be anxious, not to make men think as we do, but to direct them to the only source of truth; and let us not condemn their motives, if in interpreting the Scriptures they differ from ourselves.

"There is a strong disposition in men to make their own creeds standards for those around them, to cling to the opinions on which they differ from others with peculiar confidence and tenacity; and, as if incapable of error, to look with an evil eye on those who doubt them. But this is a strange inconsistency in a Protestant. The claim of infallibility was the very article of the Romish church against which Luther most strenuously set his face. He maintained that popes, councils, fathers, and the whole church might err; and who of us that reads the records of the church, who that sees the lamentable and now acknowledged errors, both of the Romish and Protestant communions, will not assent to this doctrine of human frailty? Yet, in opposition to this principle, how many Protestants clothe themselves with that infallibility which they have condemned and derided in Rome, assume this very place of pope in the church, prepare articles of faith for their brethren, and give over to perdition those who will not receive their decrees! To this usurping and uncharitable spirit the miseries of the church in every age are to be traced. It is this which has divided Christians into hostile bands, kindled public wars, and made the page of Christian history as black and bloody as the records of heathenism.

"Strange, that, with all history to instruct us, we do not

learn to be humble, candid, and tolerant; that we do not remember that we, and not our brothers, may have erred; and that, even if we are right, it does not become us to pronounce his error a crime.

"The peace of the church has been long enough disturbed. There is but one way to restore it. We must respect each other's rights, feel our own fallibility, be kind to them that differ from us, and be just to the excellencies and sincerity of all denominations. Look where we will into the innumerable divisions of the church, we may everywhere find marks of the spirit of Jesus. The Catholic church, even if it seems to us the most corrupt, can boast of names which do honour to humanity. Let us cease to think that our own sect has engrossed all truth and all goodness. This charity is the ornament of the true Christian, and the only bond which can unite disciples too long divided; the only remedy which can heal the wounded and lacerated body of Christ."

ADDRESS AT THE FORMATION OF THE BERRY-STREET CONFERENCE.

May, 1820. LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY. "The views and dispositions which have led to this meeting may easily be expressed. It was thought by some of us, that the ministers of this Commonwealth who are known to agree in what are called *Liberal and Catholic views of Christianity*, needed a bond of union, a means of intercourse, and an opportunity of conference not as yet enjoyed. It was thought that by meeting to join their prayers and counsels, to report the state and prospects of religion in different parts of the Commonwealth, to communicate the methods of advancing it which have been found most successful, to give warning of dangers not generally apprehended, to seek advice in difficulties, and to take a broad survey of our ecclesiastical affairs, and of the wants of our churches—much light, strength, comfort, animation, zeal, would be spread through our body. It was thought that, by such a meeting, brotherly love would be advanced, that a foundation would be laid for joint exertion, and that many valuable objects, which now languish through our ignorance of each other, and want of concert, might be prosecuted with vigour and success. It was thought that the circumstances of the times demand a more earnest co-operation than formerly—that, living, as we do, in an age in which

the principle of combination, the power of associated numbers, is resorted to by all sects and parties in an unprecedented degree, we were bound to avail ourselves of this instrumentality, as far as consists with the free, upright, independent spirit of our religion. For these ends it was proposed that an annual meeting should be held, which should be spent in prayer, in hearing an address from one of our number, in offering reports as to the state of our churches, and in conference as to the best methods of advancing religion.

"The individuals who originated this plan did not, however, intend to forestal the opinions of their brethren, by making their plan too minute; but wished that at the first meeting the whole question should be considered at large:—'In what way the ministers who are understood to hold the milder forms of Christianity may be brought into closer connexion and more united exertion.' I have only to add, that in one particular they were agreed,—that, whilst the meeting should be confined to those who harmonize generally in opinion, it should be considered as having for its object, not simply the advancement of their *peculiar views*, but the general diffusion of *practical religion* and of the *spirit of Christianity*.

"Having thus given the views of the individuals who suggested this meeting, I proceed to address you on some of the topics which were considered to be most suited to the occasion, and shall offer some remarks,—first, on the general spirit which belongs to our profession; and secondly, on the duties which are particularly appropriate to us in the present state of the Church.

"The general spirit which belongs to us as ministers, which constitutes the spirit of our profession, which gives force and earnestness to exertion, and seriousness and dignity to the character, originates in a cherished conviction of the greatness of our end. We are to feel as men set apart to a great work, who have great interests depending on us, great powers and instruments for doing good entrusted to us, and a solemn account to render for our use of these means. We must labour to raise our minds to the height of our vocation, to think generously, nobly of its design, to feel that we are devoted to an object deserving a far more intense energy of purpose than any of the interests for which worldly men contend so keenly, and keep society in an uproar. Nothing

calls forth the soul like a consciousness of being dedicated to a sublime work, in which illustrious beings are our associates, and of which the consequences are interminable. I am speaking with no inflation, I trust. I am not using commonplace language to which I attach little meaning, when I say that this is the consciousness which should accompany us through our office, and be the all-pervading, all-quickening spirit of our private studies and public labours.

"The Christian religion is in a particular manner committed to the care, watchfulness, protection of ministers; and Christianity, if it be true, must be acknowledged as eminently the cause of God, and the highest interest of human beings. We exaggerate nothing when we speak of all human institutions,—government, science, arts, public wealth, public prosperity, of all the outward, positive goods of life, and even of the progress of intellect and the development of genius, as inferior and comparatively unimportant concerns; for man's relations to God and to a future life are, after all, the true springs of purity, goodness, greatness, consolation, joy; and it is by making them known in their reality and extent, that *society* is to be advanced and refined, as well as *individuals* redeemed and trained for Heaven.

"Let us, then, never forget that the religion which reveals the True God and Immortal Life, which is the best legacy of past ages, and the only hope for the future, is committed to us, to be preserved, extended, perpetuated; and let the dignity of our office—an office before which the splendour of thrones, and the highest distinctions of earthly ambition grow dim—be used by us to develop a just elevation of mind, a force of resolution and action, a superiority to temporary applause, a willingness to live and die, to labour and suffer, for the promotion of Christianity. . . . . .

"The present is not an age of controversy of believers with infidels, but of believers with believers; and it is not uncommon now to hear the name of Christian denied to those who, in earlier seasons of peril, were thought the most powerful defenders of the faith. It is not, however, the distinguishing peculiarity of our times that Christian fights with Christian, for such contentions make up the burden of ecclesiastical history; but this seems to me to be the striking distinction of the age, that Christians, instead of being arrayed, as heretofore, under the different standards of little sects, are gradually gathering by large masses and with systematic order

into *two* great divisions. These two great divisions are known among us by the names of ORTHODOX and LIBERAL; and although it is true that other party distinctions remain, yet these are so prominent and comprehensive, that they deserve our peculiar and almost exclusive attention, in considering the special duties which are imposed on us by the times.

"This most important division of the Christian community is traced to different causes by the different parties. The Orthodox maintain that the great cause of it is an arrogant disposition in their opponents to exalt reason at the expense of Revelation, to scatter the sacred cloud of mystery which hangs over the deep things of God, to reject the Divine word because it apparently contradicts the conclusions of human understanding. On the other hand, the Liberal or Rational maintain that this division is to be traced to the advancement of the human mind, to the establishment of just principles of Biblical criticism, to the emancipation of Christianity from the corruption of ages of darkness, and that it is not their unwarrantable boldness, but a servile adherence on the part of their opponents to prejudices consecrated by antiquity, which prevents the union of Christians.

"These explanations, though totally opposed to each other, assist us to understand the true nature of the controversy which agitates the community. We may learn from them, that particular doctrines are not the chief walls of separation. The great question is not, whether the trinity, or vicarious punishment, or innate sin, be true. There is a broader question which now divides us, and it is this,—*How far is* REASON *to be used in explaining* REVELATION?

"The Liberal Christian not only differs from his Orthodox brother on particular points, but differs in his mode of explaining that Book which they both acknowledge to be the umpire. He maintains that the great, essential principles of Christianity, such as God's unity and paternal character, and the equity and mercy of his administration, are there revealed with noontide brightness, and that they accord perfectly with the discoveries of nature, and the surest dictates of our moral faculties. Consequently he maintains that passages of Scripture, which, taken separately, might give different ideas of God's nature and government, are, in common candour to the sacred writers, to be construed in consistency with these fundamental truths. He affirms, too, that just as far as we

acquaint ourselves with the circumstances under which these passages were written, such a consistent interpretation is seen to be the intention of the authors, and that we are therefore justified in believing that nothing but the antiquity of the sacred writings prevents us from making the same discovery in relation to other passages which continue to be obscure.

"The Orthodox Christian discards as impious this exercise of reason, though he himself not seldom is compelled to resort to it, and maintains that the Scriptures are frittered away by his opponents because they take the liberty, which, when needed, is taken by all, of explaining figuratively certain passages, which, according to their literal import, seem to contradict the general strain of Scripture and the clearest views which God's works and word afford of his wisdom and goodness. Such is the state of the controversy among us. A rational, consistent interpretation of Scripture is contended for by one party, who maintain that before such an interpretation the doctrines of the Trinity, of Infinite Satisfaction, of Election, of Irresistible Grace, and Sudden Conversion, fly as the shades of the night before the sun; whilst the other party maintain that these doctrines are not a whit the less credible because they offend reason and the moral sense; that an important part of faith is the humiliation of the understanding, weakened and perverted as it is by sin, and that mystery is one of the sure and essential marks of Divine revelation.

"The question now presents itself, What duties result from this state of the Church?

"Is this controversy an important one? Is this rational interpretation of the Scriptures for which we plead important? Are the doctrines which seem to us to flow from such interpretation worth contending for? These questions will help us to judge of our duty at the present moment. And in answer to them I would maintain, that the controversy is of great importance, and that we owe to Jesus Christ, our Master, and to his gospel, a strenuous defence of the rational, consistent interpretation which we are seeking to give to his word. The success, perhaps the very existence, of Christianity requires this service at our hands. Christianity cannot flourish, or continue, unless thus interpreted. It is a fact, that, however disordered human affairs seem to be, society is becoming more enlightened; and there is a growing demand

for a form of religion which will agree with the clear dictates of conscience, and the plain manifestations which the universe makes of God. An irrational form of religion cannot support itself against the advances of intelligence. We have seen in Catholic countries a general revolting of enlightened men from Christianity, through disgust at Popery, the only form under which it was presented to their view. Let an irrational Protestantism be exclusively propagated, so that the intelligent will be called to make their election between this and infidelity, and the result can hardly be doubted. The progressive influence of Christianity depends mainly on the fact, that it is a rational religion; by which I mean, not that it is such a system as reason could discover without revelation, and still less that it is a cold and lifeless scheme of philosophical doctrines, but that it is a religion which agrees with itself, with our moral nature, with our experience and observation, with the order of the universe, and the manifest attributes of God. . . . . .

"I have time to add but one more reason for earnestly and firmly defending and spreading what we deem the consistent, rational, and just interpretation of Christianity; and it is this, that the cause of *Practical Religion*, of evangelical piety and morals, is deeply concerned in this movement. On this point a more particular discussion is needed than the present limits allow, because increasing pains are taken to represent our views as unfriendly to vital religion, and to connect with opposite doctrines the ideas of devoted zeal and seriousness. This fact is particularly interesting to *us*, for our great work as Christian ministers is to promote *Practical Christianity*, love to God and love to man; and our peculiarities are suspicious indeed, if they are in any manner unfavourable to this supreme end of our office.

"But the reproach is groundless. On the contrary, the chief motive, I conceive, for insisting on and spreading rational views is, that they are manifestly more suited than so-called Orthodox views to reconcile men's hearts to God, to purify and exalt human nature, to advance charity and philanthropy, and all the peculiar virtues of the gospel. Did I not believe this, I should say, let us at once lay down the weapons of controversy, for even if we hold the truth, it is not worth contending for, it ought not to be contended for, at the hazard of the peace of the community, if it is only a theorem for the speculative intellect, an abstract science,

without power to operate on the character, inapplicable to the conscience and life. Again I say, it is the *practical influence* of Liberal views, it is the baneful tendency of Orthodox views, which summons us to the zealous advocacy of rational and consistent Christianity."

1820. CONGREGATIONALISM. "Our fathers maintained the independence of Christian churches. This was their fundamental principle. They taught that every church or congregation of Christians is an independent community,—that it is competent to its own government, has the sole power of managing its own concerns, electing its own ministers, and deciding its own controversies, and that it is not subject to any other churches, or to bishops, or synods, or assemblies, or to any foreign ecclesiastical tribunal whatever. This great principle seemed to our fathers not only true, but infinitely important. . . . . .

"The question now offers itself, Were our fathers justifiable in adopting and asserting this principle? And one answer immediately suggests itself. In the Scriptures we find not one word of a national church, not an intimation that all the churches of the same country should link themselves together, should give up their independence and self-control, and subject themselves to a common master and a few prelates. In Scripture we find but two uses of the word Church, when applied to religious concerns. It sometimes means the whole body of Christians spread over the earth, and sometimes a particular congregation of Christians accustomed to meet in one place. That such congregations are to submit themselves to one common head or pope, as the Catholics teach, or to a national head, as the English church teaches, or to any power or tribunal distinct from that which subsists in each, is nowhere even hinted in the Scriptures. Such connexions are human arrangements, and can be defended only by arguments drawn from their necessity, or their obvious fitness to promote the ends of the Christian religion.

"But can such a defence be sustained? What benefits, I pray you, are to be expected from uniting particular churches into a mass, a body, under one government? To answer these questions, consider the purposes for which churches are instituted,—and they may be expressed in a short compass. Churches are instituted that Christians may grow in knowledge, piety, and charity, by meeting together as Christians, by joining in worship, by communing together in

Christ's ordinances, by receiving instruction from a public teacher, and uniting in good works. The association is a friendly one, intended to promote holiness, truth, and universal virtue, by persuasion, example, and intercourse. Now, I ask, how are these objects advanced by combining many churches under one government? Will a church be more strongly united in love, will it worship more fervently, or make surer progress in truth, if its minister be appointed, its worship regulated, its creed established, by a foreign power, be that power a pope, or a king, or an assembly of bishops, or an assembly of elders? One would think that every church could better consult its own edification—and this is its great object—than strangers.

"There should undoubtedly be a close union between different churches, but *a union of charity*, and not a consolidation into one mass, or a subjection to one tribunal. This last mode of binding churches together is uncongenial with the free and equal spirit of Christianity, engenders ambition, intrigue, and jealousy, subjects Christ's Church to civil or ecclesiastical bondage, substitutes force for persuasion, and stifles the spirit of inquiry. These are almost inevitable effects. Once create a power or jurisdiction over all the churches of a country, or over a large number, and you create a prize for ambition. This power becomes important to the magistrate, it excites the craving of the clergy. They who gain it will not fail to strengthen and extend it; free inquiry will be its prey; and the cardinal virtues of the gospel—humility, meekness, and charity—will be trodden under its feet. . . . . .

"Congregationalism is the only effectual protection of the Church from usurpation, the only effectual security of Christian freedom, of the right of private judgment. As such let us hold it dear. Let us esteem it an invaluable legacy. Let us resist every effort to wrest it from us. Attempts have been made, and may be repeated, to subject our churches to tribunals subversive of their independence. Let the voice of our fathers be heard, warning us to stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made us free. The independence of our churches was the fundamental principle which they aimed to establish here, and here may it never die." *

* The reader, who would trace the gradual development of Mr. Channing's principles, should read, in connexion with this address, the tracts on "Objections to Unitarian Christianity Considered," 1819, Works, Vol. V,

Chap. IV. — SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

Æt. 34–42. 1814–1822.

Controversy was utterly uncongenial to Mr. Channing; his temper, tastes, desires, habits, all conspired to make it repugnant. He was discriminating in processes of thought, instinctively repelled dogmas, however time-hallowed, which were abhorrent to the dictates of his moral nature, made nice distinctions between opinions resulting from accidental influences and truths addressed to the reason of man universally in the creeds transmitted by tradition, and was earnestly watching for a brighter spiritual day to dawn; but, while thus impelled to join the ranks of the progress-party, and fitted by eloquence to be a leader there, he yet appreciated so justly what was good in the tendencies of established bodies of believers, and so cordially sympathized with the character displayed by Christians of every denomination, that he felt he was doing violence to his heart by withdrawing from their communion. Above all, he was so conscious of the darkness, ignorance, sophistry, overspreading the theological world, and so fervently longing for some full vision of Divine Wisdom, that a position of sectarian dogmatism seemed to him as absurd as it was presumptuous. He was chiefly desirous to forget the things behind and to press on. It would be treating him with great injustice, then, not to present some more positive traces of his spiritual growth during these years of painful dissension. How very small a space controversy occupied in his mind is proved by the fact, that, among his unpublished sermons and manuscripts of that period, there does not remain *a single controversial paper.* He was seeking to reverence and love God, to respect and sympathize with man, to form himself and his fellows anew in Christ's image, to mould society upon the pattern of Divine justice. This will appear in the following extracts.

SECTION FIRST.

RELIGION.

Oct. 1814. Divine goodness and justice one. "I would have you penetrated with the conviction that God is

pp. 393–410, "The Moral Argument against Calvinism," 1820, Works, Vol. I., pp. 217–241, and chiefly the "Discourse at the Ordination of the Rev. Jared Sparks, Baltimore," 1819, Works, Vol. III., pp. 59–103.

most just; but I would have you hold this truth in consistency with that most interesting of all truths, that God delights to do good, and that all his operations are directed by benevolence. Benevolence and justice are harmonious attributes of God, to which all others may be reduced; and the true idea of justice is, that it is a branch or mode of exercise of benevolence.

"This thought is so important, especially as giving us the clearest view of the justice of God, that I shall proceed to offer a few remarks in illustration of it. There is reason to fear that this attribute has not always been placed in its true light. Some persons, misled by confining their attention to a few passages of Scripture, have represented justice as a distinct perfection from goodness, and as sometimes clashing with it, and opposing the wishes of Divine benevolence. Such sentiments are dishonourable to God, and injurious to true piety, by stripping his character of its chief excellence, the *infinity* of goodness. Such representations of justice have induced some to regard it as an attribute to be dreaded rather than to be esteemed and loved; and many have wished to exclude it from their conception of God. But an attention to the general scope of Scripture will correct the error, and teach us that God's justice coincides with goodness, and is even a branch of it, and that it is therefore to be regarded with affectionate reverence. . . . . .

"Divine justice is, in fact, an exercise of enlarged benevolence, enjoining and enforcing by rewards and punishments those dispositions and actions on which the peace, order, improvement, and felicity of rational beings depend. I repeat it, *the principle of justice is benevolence.* It is God's goodness which inclines and impels him to maintain a moral government, or to treat beings according to their characters; for nothing has so much influence as character on the happiness or misery of his universe. The more benevolence a being possesses, the more he will honour, reward, and encourage that spirit of universal love which is the very soul of happiness, and the more he will discountenance that selfish and ungrateful spirit which disorders, and darkens, and desolates creation.

"God's justice, then, is a wise benevolence, employing rewards and punishments to exalt intelligent creatures to the most perfect and happy character, to a participation of that love or moral goodness which forms his own felicity."

1816. SENSIBILITY TO SIN. "'I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' There is no man, who knows himself, who will not admit that the language of this text is an acknowledgment which should often proceed from his own lips. All, indeed, have not committed the same sins. The stain of guilt is not equally broad and deep on every conscience. Some, through the good providence of God, and the influences of a wise and pious education, have escaped the gross vices into which the prodigal son was precipitated, and some from their earliest years have been swayed by the principles of piety. But none have advanced in the path of duty with a step which has never faltered. No man has been always true to God, and to the dictates of his own mind. All have sinned. All have cause for humble acknowledgment, and the sense of unworthiness before God should form a part of every man's habitual tone of feeling.

"I am aware that this duty of preserving a sensibility to our sins has often been overstated, or enjoined in language too unqualified or unguarded. Men have sometimes been addressed as if they had nothing to do but to remember and lament their sins, as if they could not speak of themselves in language too full of abasement, and as if there were a virtue in doubting their capacity for good, and denying whatever improvements they may have made in holiness.

"Do not imagine for a moment that Christianity encourages an unnatural, morbid, extravagant mode of thought. It calls you to other duties and services besides the recollection of your sins; and it teaches you, even when engaged in these recollections, still to be just to yourselves, to think soberly or judiciously, to charge on yourselves no imaginary or exaggerated guilt, and to be sensible of virtues, if you really possess them, as truly as of defects and transgressions. True humility has its foundation in a correct estimate of our characters. It is the virtue of an enlightened understanding. It is to be formed, not by fixing our thoughts exclusively on the worst parts of our conduct, and ascribing the guilt of these to our whole lives, but by observing our whole lives impartially, surveying the good and the evil in our temper and general deportment, and in this way learning to what degree we are influenced by the various dispositions and principles which enter into our character. Such discriminat-

ing attention to ourselves will make the best of us humble; but a humility thus formed will be very different from that vague feeling which some persons cherish, that they have contracted enormous guilt. We shall thus learn to know what are the particular defects and sins which we ought to confess, what proportion they bear to our whole character, and what methods may be most successfully applied for their correction."

1820. REPENTANCE. "We repent then, and then only, when, seeing a propensity to be evil, we resist it as such, and bring it into subjection to the principle of duty. Repentance is a revolution of mind which we resolve upon, in which we are voluntarily active, and which is established by our perseverance. The command to repent is founded on the fact, that God has given us a power over our own minds; and until this power is exerted, until a change is produced by our own deliberate efforts, we are not penitent.

"When I speak of power over our own minds, I do not mean that a man can by a single act of his will, by the effort of a moment, change his character, efface the impression of years, calm the violence of long-indulged anger, cleanse imagination from impurities on which it has long surfeited, or raise to God a mind which has grown to the earth. These miracles are not suddenly wrought in the mind, any more than is the full-grown and fruitful tree made to spring in an instant from the seed. The work of undoing evil habits, of retracing wrong steps, of subduing passions which in our folly we have allowed to become our masters, is gradual and slow. But still, a man who acknowledges the importance of such a change, who feels his responsibility, and who expects to reap as he shall sow, has power given him to accomplish it,—power to gain daily victories over himself,—power to fly from situations which tempt him too strongly and surely from his duty,—power to reflect on those great truths respecting God and his mercy to the penitent, and his inflexible purpose of punishing persevering guilt, which weaken vice and build up holy resolutions,—power to avail himself of virtuous companions, pious examples, and the counsel of good men,—power to examine himself, and learn his particular danger,—and, above all, power to pray to God, the original of all strength, success, and purity. We are endowed with these powers, which, if exerted, will certainly make us better, will change the frame of our minds, and effect an amendment

which, though it may not be perceptible from day to day, becomes very obvious when we compare distant periods of our lives. It is by the use of these powers that all true repentance is accomplished. Some, indeed, tell us that repentance is a work done immediately for us by God, that we are transformed, regenerated, renewed, by a sudden and resistless agency of the Divine Spirit. But why, then, are we called to repent and renew ourselves? Why is penitence assigned as a duty, and the neglect of it punished as a crime? True, it is God who gives repentance. All good comes from him, whether spiritual or natural; but it comes through the powers which he bestows, and through his blessing on the faithful use of them. The character is never changed in a moment, or without our own activity.

"Repentance, we have said, is a change of mind effected by our own exertions. Another characteristic of repentance is, that it is a universal change, a turning from sin, at least as far as the will is concerned. Repentance is a strong purpose to remove everything evil from our character. It excepts no form, mode, degree of evil. It makes no compromise with sin, but wages against it an unsparing and exterminating war. I do not repent, if to bribe conscience I sacrifice one evil desire or pleasure whilst others are tolerated; if I hope to atone by earnestness in some duties for negligence in others; if particular virtues are used to weigh down particular sins, and a general correctness is made a substitute for efforts to improve. To repent, is not to do wrong with moderation and under certain restrictions. It does not mean that we allow ourselves to wander only a certain distance from our duty. To repent, is to try to perform our whole duty, to mark every known departure from it, and to aim at universal rectitude of heart and life. Repentance is not, indeed, one with full perfection. It is a state consistent with many failures and sins. But it is perfect in its seed and root, perfect in its aim and aspiration, perfect in purpose and prospect. God accepts it because it is a pledge of spotless purity, and an advancing step towards it. . . . . .

"Some, when they speak of repentance, mean little more than that they have grieved for transgression. Now, sorrow is, I admit, an entrance-way to repentance, a preparation for it, a means of it; but it is not the grace itself. The truth is, we must toil and struggle, as well as lament; and grief does no good any farther than it leads to a habit of watchfulness,

and of opposition to the first motion of guilty desire. The common sorrow of men over their consciousness of misconduct is no great virtue. To mourn for a past sin is neither a rare nor a high attainment. The difficulty is, to hate the sin before it is committed, to look upon it in the moment of strong temptation as we shall do when it is performed, to resolve against it when it is yet in our power to withhold our act, and not when it is completed and irrevocable."

1815. SPIRITUAL INFLUENCES. "There is another class of Christians, who, whilst they believe that God constantly operates on the human mind, and that without his operation no fruits of goodness are produced, yet believe that the mode of his influence is essentially different from that presented in the view just given. They believe that Divine influence is not sudden and irresistible, but suited to the nature of man as a free and accountable being; that it is habitual, gentle, persuasive, offering truth to the mind and motives to the will, but leaving the individual at liberty to comply with or reject it. They conceive that compulsion or irresistible power would entirely destroy the virtue of human actions, would reduce man to a machine, and would thus entirely defeat God's end, which is to render us objects of approbation and reward. They conceive that our whole goodness is to be ascribed to God as its author, because he gives us all our powers, our understanding, our consciences, our knowledge of duty, our capacity of improvement, because he furnishes in his gospel the most powerful motives to obedience, and because, by the silent influences of his providence and spirit on the heart, he suggests good thoughts, awakens desires of holiness, and furnishes all the strength which we need to resist temptation. But they believe that God's agency stops here, that he does not in any manner compel men to follow the light and the motives which he presents,—does not force them to use the strength which he bestows. It depends on themselves whether they concur with or resist his grace, whether they use well or neglect the powers which he gives, whether they will serve God or disobey him."

1817. WALKING WITH GOD. "It is the earnest desire of the pious man, whose heart has been touched by God's good spirit, to feel what he believes, that God is with him; and his attention is often withdrawn from all finite things, that he may bring home this thought with power to his heart.

"The quickness of perception, the sensibility, to which

the mind, by use and time, may attain on these subjects, is not easily believed by those who have made no progress in religion. The pious man, whose mind is exercised on God, comes to see him in a peculiar manner. He has a consciousness of his presence which he cannot easily describe or communicate to one who has lived wholly in the world. In scenes which to others are blank and desolate, he feels that he is not alone; and in society where others see only their fellow-beings, a higher presence is revered and perceived. Even when thinking of outward things, there is, if I may so speak, in the breast of a devout man, a latent sense of God; just as, when we are near or in sight of an individual whom we respect, there is a consciousness of him, and a reference to him, even though we are conversing freely with other beings.

"The pious man finds in the whole of life, in its successes or reverses, in the kindness of friends or the calumnies of foes, in the difficulties and trials of his state, calls and motives to this secret converse with God, and life becomes more and more interesting in proportion as it strengthens this sacred intimacy. Often, when to those around he seems to be living among things seen, and engaged by human agencies, he is holding a high and pure intercourse with the Father of his spirit. And this piety brings its reward in the serenity and refinement which it imparts to the whole spirit of him who thus walks with God."

1813. THE DIGNITY OF PIETY. "What is there which gives such dignity to our nature as the capacity of knowing and of loving the best of things? It is chiefly this capacity of religion that lifts us above brutes, that allies us to superior orders of beings. You must at once acknowledge that the mind is ennobled just in proportion to the grandeur and sublimity of the objects on which it is employed. Think, then, of the elevation of that mind which habitually directs itself to God, of that heart in which this infinitely great and good being is enthroned. We ought to consider piety as the highest, most generous, and dignified attainment which is placed within our reach,—in fact, as the noblest characteristic which an intelligent creature can exhibit.

"It is melancholy that piety should not be associated in every mind with the idea of dignity and honour. But, unhappily, religion has been so often worn as a mask by the unprincipled, it has so often been accompanied by mummery

and superstition, that some have associated with its venerable name feelings of contempt and degradation. They think that to be devout is to be weak. Of all delusions there is none greater than this.

We should feel that piety is the very spirit of heaven, the very life of angels, a pure celestial flame, ever tending to that world from which it descended, and aspiring towards Him by whom it is enkindled. We should feel that piety partakes the glory of God, who is its object, and assimilates us to him; that it gives warmth to benevolence, strength to fortitude, firmness to integrity, and calmness and peace to afflicted virtue. These are the venerable and attractive attributes in which piety should be arrayed."

1816. RESEMBLANCE TO GOD. "There is something most affecting in the thought of resembling God. It is a reflection which ought to fill and almost overwhelm our minds, that we have a nature capable of bearing the image of God's perfections. This single view of our nature throws round it a lustre infinitely surpassing all the honours of the world; and this thought of resembling God is not a presumptuous one. The purity, the virtue, to which we are called in the gospel, and which men have in a measure attained, is *the same in nature* with that which constitutes the glory of God. In particular, that disinterested love, that diffusive benevolence, to which Jesus Christ so emphatically calls us, forms the highest glory of the Divine character. The language of John on this subject is remarkable. 'God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God.' Astonishing thought! By Christian goodness we are made partakers of God's nature, we shine with a ray of his light, we share his highest perfection, we become temples of the Divinity, God dwells in us. This grand reality is too faintly felt by us. We do not with sufficient force conceive the intimate relation which we may sustain to God. We do not heartily believe that Christian virtue constitutes us his children, by making us like him. We do not bring it home to ourselves, that in sinning we are extinguishing a ray of Divinity within our souls, and that by every step in moral progress we are ascending towards God, the Original and End of all excellence and felicity.

1818. TRUE PIETY ONE WITH ACTIVE GOODNESS. "Religion is a high degree of delight in all the perfections of God,—in his wisdom, his rectitude, his benevolence; and

what is the most acceptable expression of this veneration? Is it enough to admire and praise? Do we not most efficiently manifest our esteem by seeking to become what we praise, by transcribing into our lives the perfections of God, by copying his wisdom in the judicious pursuit of good ends, his justice in the discharge of all our obligations, and his benevolence in the diffusion of all possible happiness around us? Then is our love of God the most exalted, when in our several spheres we aim to be like him, to reflect his glory, to act for the great end for which he is ever active, the improvement and happiness of every being within our influence.

"I wish you to feel that religion, love to God, is in no way at war with our relations and present state. It does not take us out of the world. It is not inconsistent with any of the useful pursuits of life, but unites them with itself, and makes them oblations to God. He who feels the true influence of religion does not relinquish his labour. On the contrary, he becomes more industrious, labours with more cheerfulness, is more contented with his lot, however difficult. Religion furnishes motives which give to existence a dignity and animation such as he was unconscious of before. Neither does he forsake society. On the contrary, his social character is improved. Taught by God's goodness, he looks round on his fellow-beings with new tenderness. A more benignant smile lights up his countenance at sight of human virtue and happiness, a more frequent pain is felt at sight of human guilt and misery. He is more conscientious, more just in his transactions, more faithful in all his relations, milder in his temper, and more active in his charity. Neither does he give up all his enjoyments. His religion cuts off no innocent and healthy stream of pleasure. It heightens pleasure, by making it more rational, more pure, more equable, more consistent with all the duties of life. This, my friends, is the nature and influence of true religion.

"In one word, religion is designed to refine and improve our whole nature, to make us better in every condition, to awaken all our faculties, to render us active, intelligent, generous, pure, temperate, meek, contented, and serene. And it is genuine just so far, and no farther, as these effects are produced. This influence of religion over the whole life is the proper standard by which it should be measured."

1819. PIETY AND MORALITY. "What is it in God which

calls forth our veneration, gratitude, love, filial attachment? What attribute gives him a claim to these sentiments? On this point there is little difference of opinion. All Christians will tell you that God is chiefly to be loved and revered because he is good or benevolent, and because he is righteous or just,—because he desires at once the happiness and the excellence of his creatures,—because he rejoices to send benefits on all who are fitted to receive them,—because he enjoins and rewards virtue, and abhors and punishes impenitent guilt. Benevolence and righteousness, then, are the attributes on which *Piety* chiefly rests as its object, and by communion with which it acts and grows.

"But consider a moment what benevolence and righteousness are. Are they not the very qualities which we mean by *Morality?* What is morality but the exercise of a benevolent and just temper towards all beings within our knowledge and influence? If so, what is God's character, the character which we are to love, but perfect morality?—what but the very dispositions, in their fulness, which conscience enjoins upon every man, and which form what we call rectitude? To love God, then, is to love morality in its most perfect form; and thus we see how religion and morals pass into each other and become one.

"This idea seems to me too important to be passed over lightly. Men have always sunk a great gulf between piety and morality, religion and rectitude, devoutness and virtue. To love God has been thought something quite distinct from loving our neighbour, loving our duty, loving right and worthy actions. But they are not to be divided! To love God is the same thing as to love rectitude, for God is rectitude; this is the central principle of his character. His character is the perfection of morality, and the love of him is the love of morality. The love of God is but another name for the love of essential benevolence and justice—it is a sincere and obedient delight in a Divine government, by which these virtues are manifested, enforced, spread abroad, and renewed most gloriously. So inseparable are religion and morality. If we could conceive of God as wanting the qualities and attributes which in men we call moral virtues, we should thereby tear up and destroy the vital germ of piety. Nothing would remain for our love, veneration, and filial attachment to cling to in God. He would have no claim on us. It is because he is The Good, because he is a moral

being, and because in loving him we love Perfect Morality that we are bound to love him with all the heart, soul, and strength.

"According to these views, the genuineness and strength of our religion appear altogether in our love of righteousness and goodness, and in our endeavour to approach God in these moral perfections. I know religion is generally represented as something different from this. The labour of men has always been to divorce piety from virtue—to substitute adulation for moral obedience, acts of homage to God for equity and benevolence to men. Heathenism was little more than an attempt to conciliate the Divine favour by outward rites, to please God by other means than a pure and good life. We cannot wonder that men fly to these false modes of religion, for the obligations they impose are light and easy, when compared with those of rectitude. It is vastly easier to flatter the Supreme Being than to subdue ourselves. Nothing is so hard as to root out bad passions, to be upright, at whatever cost, and to be benevolent and charitable under all provocations and difficulties. To seek a resemblance of God's moral purity is unspeakably more toilsome than to praise him with transport. . . . . .

"The happiest influence of religion appears, not in giving us occasional joys and raptures, but in communicating delicacy and power to our sense of duty, in strengthening conscience to resist all created things when they oppose its convictions, in exalting our ordinary life, in making our control of the passions complete, our charity superior to all sacrifice and suffering, and our uprightness immovable as the throne of God. The happiest influence of religion appears, not in raising us to something higher than morality, for that would be to raise us above God himself, but in giving us sublime ideas of morality, a pure will and high aim, a purpose of excellence such as never could exist without a knowledge of God's character, and a hope of his aid in imitating his goodness. Religion makes us moral by renewing our characters and lives in the image of Divine virtue. It forms us to a rectitude, and benevolence, and purity, of a higher order than worldly men can conceive. In this its glory and strength are made manifest. Religion is the perfection of morality."

1816. THE HAPPINESS OF A RELIGIOUS LIFE. "The human heart not only needs objects of affection, but it demands an

object vast, infinite as God, completely to fill and to satisfy it. The soul of man, though often debased and contracted, often discovers to us a remarkable property, perhaps the most remarkable in its constitution—a certain insatiableness of desire, a love of great objects, a discontent with what is narrow and limited, a thirst for something better than it finds on earth. This principle has sometimes been called the love of the infinite, and though often suppressed by want, and oftener by vice, it is ineradicable in human nature, and shows to us that the human mind can find repose only in the Infinite Being. God is the only fit end and object for such a being as man. The world cannot fill his mind. You see him discontented, restless, even amidst its fairest prospects. A secret uneasiness preys on him, which he can neither analyze nor describe. The truth is, his soul, whilst confined to the world, has not yet found its true element. He has desires and affections to which nothing here is proportioned.

"Whilst earthly objects are exhausted by familiarity, the thought of God becomes to the devout man continually brighter, richer, vaster; derives fresh lustre from all that he observes of nature and providence, and attracts to itself all the glories of the universe. The devout man, especially in moments of strong religious sensibility, feels distinctly that he has found the true happiness of man. He has found a Being for his veneration and love, whose character is inexhaustible; who, after ages shall have passed, will still be uncomprehended in the extent of his perfections, and will still communicate to the pure mind stronger proofs of his excellence and more intimate signs of his approval."

1816. Heaven. "Descriptions of this nature too often convey the impression that heaven is a state of rapturous ecstasy, suspending reason and the calm exercise of understanding. It is, indeed, true, that the Scriptures teach us that in the future life the affections will be powerfully excited. New sensibility will be communicated to the heart. God will be loved with a vastly purer and intenser love than is known on earth. But still the understanding will not be sacrificed to the feelings. Devotion will be calm, deliberate, reasonable. It will be the fruit of extended knowledge. All the faculties of the understanding will be exerted and invigorated, as well as the affections; and the happiness of heaven will possess that serene and reflecting character which it is becoming and honourable for rational beings to enjoy.

"Another representation of heaven, which seems to me unfavourable to a strong impression of its happiness, is this:—Heaven is often described as a place where eternity will be spent in immediate acts of Divine worship. This error arises from a too literal and narrow interpretation of passages in Scripture. Their true meaning is, that at all times, and in all places, spirits in heaven will possess that sensibility to God which places of worship are particularly designed to promote. Whatever region of this vast universe they may visit, they will regard it as God's empire, God's temple; his presence will be felt, his perfections be traced and adored, his will be cheerfully obeyed. The spirit of devotion which we ought to cherish on earth, will, indeed, be the habit of heaven; but its exercise will be consistent with the greatest variety of scenes and employments, and very unlike that wearisome monotony of an endless round of religious services which some seem to anticipate.

"I proceed to consider another view of heaven which renders it uninteresting. Heaven is sometimes described in a manner which excludes the idea of improvement, of progression. The thought of a stationary existence, of remaining the same through eternity, of a world where the mind, as it looks forward to endless ages, will see no change, no progressive ascent to superior virtue,—is a most discouraging and melancholy one. The human mind seems so impatient of limits, it so delights in boundless prospects, that we can hardly feel as if it would be happy, even in heaven itself, were it to find that it had reached its goal; that no accessions were to be made to its knowledge and goodness; that no nearer approach could be gained to God and superior orders of being; that all above it was forbidden ground, an inaccessible felicity.

"Such conceptions of heaven are altogether inconsistent with what we know of the faculties of the human understanding, which seem capable of indefinite progression, and with what we see of the works of God, which teach us that he delights in a progressive creation. We ought rather to conceive of heaven as a state which will offer far greater means of improvement than the present, which will open new fields for thought, new worlds for research, which will inspire a more intense desire of moral greatness, and give continually increasing energy and splendour to all the virtues which ennoble our nature. . . . . .

"Another error in the description of heaven, which I think renders it less interesting, is, that the thought of society is thrown too much out of sight. Now, human nature is essentially social. It wants objects of affection, companions to whom it may communicate its thoughts and purposes, and with whom it may act and enjoy. Pleasure is tasteless without friendly participation, and every view of heaven excluding this is unfavourable to an impression of its happiness. We are too apt to think of heaven as a solemn place. It ought to be viewed by us as a place of cheerful society. The countenances of its inhabitants should seem to us irradiated by a benign smile in their intercourse with one another, and their piety, though reverential, should seem to us a filial and happy sentiment, which enters into the conversation, and which they delight to manifest together.

"Another view of heaven which seems to me to weaken its interest, is this:—Its inhabitants are often described as forming a world by themselves, as having no connexion with any other beings. Heaven seems to be considered as a region separated from the rest of the universe. Now an improved and benevolent mind can hardly escape the desire of extending its acquaintance with this boundless universe of which it forms a part; and heaven would seem a place of confinement, did it shut up its inhabitants for ever from every other region. But we ought not to conceive thus of the future state of good men. We need not doubt the fact, that angels, whose home is heaven, visit our earth and bear a part in our transactions; and we have good reason to believe, that, if we obtain admission into heaven, we shall still have opportunity, not only to return to earth, but to view the operation of God in distant spheres, and be his ministers in other worlds. . . . . .

"It is not impossible, that, in our intercourse with other worlds, we shall meet with beings who are passing through the first stage of discipline, like that which is now assigned to ourselves,—beings exposed to pain, temptation, and sorrow, beings who may need our sympathy and aid, and to whom we may render the same offices which we have reason to believe angels now render to the human race. It seems to me that we do not render heaven a less interesting or less happy world, when we suppose that its inhabitants retain the tenderest sensibility, and feel for the sufferings which may be endured in other regions of the creation. There is a sym-

pathy which, though in a measure painful, gives a peculiar charm to existence, and which a good man would not wish to resign; and we ought not to believe that this is excluded from heaven.

"Once more: the descriptions which are given of heaven are often, I think, rendered less interesting than they should be, by false ideas which are entertained about the perfection of its inhabitants. It seems to be thought, that, because good men are to be perfect hereafter, they will all resemble each other; and hence that diversity of character, of taste, and habits, which contributes so much to our happiness, is made to give place to a monotonous and unvaried excellence. But all God's works are marked by variety, and to this they owe much of their interest and beauty.

"Will all this variety be blotted out in heaven? No one, who reflects that this life is a preparatory state, can doubt that our future character will be a continuation of the present, —that, if we enter heaven, we shall carry with us essentially the same minds which we possess on leaving the world, and thus all the peculiarities of earth which are consistent with goodness will be transplanted in the future state. The Scriptures teach us that it will be part of the happiness of heaven to meet there the good and excellent of former times,—the patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and other benefactors of mankind. But this happiness would be wholly lost, were men in heaven to lose their peculiar characters, were all to be cast into one mould, were all, in becoming perfect, to become perfectly alike. No,—heaven will not present this unvaried and dull uniformity. The strong lines of character which marked men on earth, we may suppose will distinguish them hereafter. Paul will retain his ardour, John his kindness, Isaiah his imagination. In heaven we shall witness every form of intellectual and moral excellence. Some of its inhabitants will exhibit to us the milder, and others the sublimer virtues. Some will be distinguished by glow of feeling, some by profoundness of thought, some by activity and energy of will. There will be, too, different degrees of the same excellence, and different employments corresponding to the character.

"The true view of heaven, that which the Scriptures give, that which reason sanctions, and that which we can most powerfully realize, is, that it will not essentially change, but rather improve our nature. We shall be the same beings as

on earth; we shall retain our present faculties, our present affections, our love of knowledge, love of beauty, love of action, love of approbation, our sympathy, gratitude, and pleasure in success. We shall probably, too, have bodies not very different from what we now have,—the eye to behold creation and receive its beauties, the ear to hear the voice of friendship and to receive the pleasures of harmony, and even sense refined and purified. This we know, that Jesus in a form like ours ascended into heaven, and when Moses and Elijah conversed with him on the Mount, they appeared in the human form, differing from ours only in its splendour; and from these facts it would seem that our future bodies will bear a general resemblance to the present."

1817. HEAVEN A PLACE FOR GROWTH AND ACTION. "In heaven the understanding will be called into vigorous exercise, and will be continually enlarged and improved by exertion. Some persons seem to conceive that the mind will at once attain its full and perfect growth in the future world, that it will ascend immediately from this region of darkness and error into the brightest light of heaven, that it will expand at once to the full extent of its capacities, that every thing which is to be known will at once be acquired, and therefore that new acquisitions will not be proposed, and will not of course awaken its activity. But this is an imagination altogether unauthorized by Scripture, and it differs so entirely from present experience, that nothing but positive declarations of Scripture can give it a claim to belief. In this life, progression is the universal law. Nothing is brought into being in its most perfect state. Everything rises to maturity from feeble beginnings.

"The all-wise Creator delights in a progressive system, in gradual improvement, not in immediate perfection. It is his uniform method to conduct beings through various stages, not to fix them at once in an unchangeable condition. Now, such being the method of Providence, and such the nature and experience of man, is it not natural to expect that in a future life our nature will be progressive, that the knowledge with which the Christian will commence his future being will be a point from which he will start, a foundation on which he will build, rather than a state in which he will eternally rest?

"Freed from all the passions and prejudices which now darken and disorder his mind, loving the truth with in-

creasing ardour, clothed with a spiritual, vigorous, refined, immortal body, released from all pain, disease, languor, and relaxing toil, and, above all, associated with enlightened and benevolent minds, with angels of light, with apostles, prophets, sages, with Jesus Christ, who is the wisdom of God, —blest with all these aids and guides, with what rapid steps must the Christian advance in the knowledge of God and of his works! And when we consider that this progression will be eternal, will never end, what an astonishing conception is given us of the future greatness of man! We cannot follow him on his path of glory. To an ever-progressing being no limits can be prescribed. There is no rank of created existence to which he will not ascend. Where seraphs now worship, there man will one day worship, and the purest praises which heaven now hears will ascend from once human lips. Are there orders of beings whose expansive minds embrace the interests of worlds as easily as we do the concerns of our business and families? The mind of man, continually improving, will enjoy the same expansion. I am lost when I attempt to represent to myself human nature perfected in heaven, and through endless ages approaching its wise and holy Creator."

1818. FUTURE RETRIBUTION. "It seems to me that a man of common understanding, reading the Scriptures without any knowledge of the way in which they have been interpreted, would not think it possible that the doctrine should ever have been drawn from them, that there is to be no future punishment. Almost any opinion would seem to him to receive greater countenance from the Bible than this. Yet this opinion has found strenuous advocates; and, from its very nature, it has not been advocated without making converts.

"This error should be resisted with earnestness, because it directly, palpably, and without disguise diminishes the restraints on vice. It is at war with society. It is a blow at the root of social order. It lets loose those propensities which are constantly struggling against the principle of duty, and which this principle, unaided by the fear of future suffering, is in multitudes poorly able to restrain. The doctrine I am opposing goes to the very extinction of conscience. Conscience in man is an echo, if I may so speak, to the will and moral sentiments of God. Its dictates are authoritative, because we feel them to be dictates of Him

who made us. A sense of God's abhorrence of sin is the chief nourishment of our abhorrence of it. Let God be viewed as so unconcerned about character as not to punish the guiltiest life, as to fall short in his administration of the plainest requisitions of justice, and a deadly torpor would spread over the human conscience. Moral sensibility would be paralyzed. . . . .

"The effects of this doctrine, indeed, may not immediately appear, because its very extravagance prevents its being thoroughly believed, because it cannot eradicate the principles of our nature, and cannot entirely efface the impressions of education. Guilt and punishment are seen to have a connexion too natural and intimate to be wholly separated even in thought. But whilst the influence of the doctrine may be counteracted by these and other causes, such as natural good dispositions, freedom from great temptation, the power of opinion, and the like, yet its proper effects must be always bad;—its fruits are bitter, its tendency is to sin and death. . . . . .

"On this account, I believe that the Scriptures, in great wisdom, say nothing of happiness reserved for the guilty after they shall have borne the penalty of their sins. If that happiness be intended for them, I should say that the present life is not the proper time for revealing it. Nothing decisively clear seems to me laid down in the Scriptures upon this subject. A solemn darkness hangs over the prison-house of the condemned. One thing alone is certain, that we shall suffer greatly hereafter, if we live here in neglect of God's known will, his providential aid, his revelation by Christ. In what way we shall suffer, or to what duration and extent, the Scriptures, it seems to me, have not precisely defined, and we need not to know. It is enough to have the impression that a great woe hangs over guilt, and that we can gain nothing, but may lose everything, by persevering transgression. It is true, as many assert, that the word 'everlasting,' when applied to punishment, does not necessarily mean without end, and that it is often applied to denote limited duration; but still, that there will be a limit to future punishment, that it will operate to reform us, or that there will be bounds to the consequences of unfortunate guilt, the Scriptures nowhere declare. God's mercy, if it shall be extended to the impenitent, is not yet revealed. The future is filled with awful gloom to those who are now living without

God, and it is but kindness towards them to encourage no delusive hope. Such a hope forms no part of my message, for in my view it makes no part of revelation. The Scriptures show us the wicked banished into darkness. In that exile it leaves them. That darkness hides them from our sight. If mercy is to be extended, it is mercy to be revealed hereafter. It is not to be taken into our account now, in estimating the consequences of sin."

1816. THE FUTURE GLORIES OF THE GOOD. "It is a very interesting view of death, that, instead of destroying, it sets a seal on the virtues of good men, the seal of eternity. It places them beyond danger. It takes them from a region of moral infection, where they sometimes drooped, where temptation triumphs over the most experienced in piety, where the purest excellence can hardly be viewed without feelings of solicitude.

"When we think of the good and holy who have left us, we should banish from our thoughts all gloomy images which death presents. They should rise before our minds, improved, perfected, clothed with a new lustre of goodness. We should think of them as ascended to a purer region. The countenance on which we were accustomed to see the expression of all kind affections should shine upon us brightened with a more benignant smile. Their piety should appear as raised, refined, and kindled into purer ardour by its near approach to God. We should see them surrounded with better friends and examples than those they have left, and in the midst of the purest and happiest society.

"That in this wide creation there are spheres of nobler action than are enjoyed on earth, that there are wider fields for the powers of intelligent beings, and more generous and glorious objects for benevolence, who can doubt? This world, it is not unlikely, is the abode of the feeblest and most imperfect members of God's family. It is, perhaps, the sphere of the humblest labour. Nowhere, perhaps, do intelligent beings enjoy, expand, so little. Go where we will in creation, if we except the abode of the condemned, probably we shall find more improved intelligence, and wider spheres of usefulness. Our present experience teaches us that God delights in an active creation. We see all nature in motion. We see that he delights in accomplishing his most important ends by the agency of his rational creatures, and that thus their concurrence with the creation forms at

once their happiness and dignity. Who can doubt that this same principle regulates the whole universe which God has made, that everywhere his purposes are committed to the charge of creatures, that all spaces and ages are one vast field of exertion? Among the chief wonders and glories which the future world is to disclose to us will be the enlarged powers, relations, and influences of virtuous beings.

"Let us not, then, imagine that the usefulness of the good is finished at death. Then rather does it begin. Let us not judge of their state by associations drawn from the chillness and silence of the grave. They have gone to abodes of life, of warmth, of action. They have gone to fill a larger place in the system of God. Death has expanded their powers. The clogs and fetters of the perishable body have fallen off, that they may act more freely and with more delight in the grand system of creation. We should represent them to our minds as ascended to a higher rank of existence, and admitted to co-operate with far higher communities. This earth was only their school, their place of education, where we saw their powers comparatively in an infant state. They have now reached a maturer age, and are gone to sustain more important relations. They have been called because their agency was needed in higher services than those of this world. Where they are now acting, it is not given to us to know; but the all-wise Father can never be without a sphere for the virtues of his children. It would be grateful to believe that their influence reaches to the present state, and we certainly are not forbidden to indulge the hope. But wherever they may be, they are more useful, more honourably occupied, than when on earth; and by following their steps, we may, however separated from them during life, hope to obtain admission into the same bright regions where they are pressing onward to perfection."

SECTION SECOND.

HUMAN NATURE.

1815. GENEROUS VIEWS OF MAN. "We need to feel more deeply that we are intrusted with a religion which is designed to ennoble human nature, which recognises in man the capacities of all that is good, great, and excellent, and which offers every encouragement and aid to the pursuit of perfection. The Christian minister, in preparing his

discourses, should often recollect, that man, degraded as he frequently appears, has yet powers and faculties which may be refined into angelic perfection, that he is invited to prepare for the community of angels, that he is formed for endless progress in intellectual and moral excellence and felicity. He should often recollect, that in Jesus Christ our nature has been intimately united with the Divine, and that in Jesus Humanity is already enthroned in heaven. Familiarized to these generous conceptions, it should often be his object in preaching to unfold to men their capacities of greatness, to reveal the splendour of that destiny to which they are called by Jesus Christ, to awaken aspirations after a nobler character and a higher existence, and to inflame them with the love of all the graces and virtues with which Jesus came to enrich and adorn human nature. In this way he will prove that he understands the true and great design of the gospel and the ministry, which is the perfection of man's character. . . . . .

"May I be permitted to say, that perhaps the greatest defect in the ministry, as at present conducted, is, that it is not sufficiently directed to ennoble and elevate the minds of men. It does not breathe a sufficiently generous spirit. It does not appeal sufficiently to the highest and best principles of the human heart, nor delineate with sufficient frequency and energy those lofty sentiments and deeds to which something congenial responds in almost every breast. It appeals too constantly to the lowest principle of man's nature,—I mean the principle of fear, which, under judicious excitement, is indeed of undoubted use, but which, as every parent knows, when habitually awakened, is always found to depress and debase the mind, to break the spirit, to give a tameness to the character, and to chill the best affection. Perhaps one cause of the limited influence of Christianity is, that, as Christianity is too often exhibited, it seems adapted to form an abject, servile character, rather than to raise its disciples to true greatness and dignity. Perhaps, were Christianity more habitually regarded as a system whose chief design is to infuse honourable sentiments, an ingenuous love of God, a superiority to unworthy pursuits, a virtue akin to that of heaven, its reception would be more cordial, and its influence more extensive, more happy, more accordant with its great end,—the perfection of human nature."

1816. MAN'S CAPACITIES OF GOODNESS. "One of the

great characteristics of the present day is a lowness, a sordidness, a frigidness of thought and feeling. Men think meanly of their nature, and hence their conduct is selfish and earthly. We do not, indeed, see men in general given up to gross vices. We do not meet around us the ferocity or beastly licentiousness of the savage state. We find many marks of improvement, when we compare the present with earlier ages. But there is little elevation of sentiment. Comparatively few seem to be conscious of their high original, their capacities of excellence, their relation to God, their interest in eternity.

"Blessed be God, in the history of every age and nation—amidst the ravages of ambition and the mean aims of selfishness—there have broken forth nobler sentiments, and the evidences of a heavenly virtue. Every age has been illustrated by men who bore themselves like men, and vindicated the cause of human nature,—men who, in circumstances of great trial, have adhered to moral and religious principle, to the cause of persecuted truth, to the interests of humanity, to the hope of immortality,—who have trodden under foot the fairest gifts of fortune and the world in the pursuit of duty. It has often pleased God to gather round these men the clouds of adversity, that their virtues might shine with a sublimer splendour. This is the greatest value of history, that it introduces us to persons of this illustrious order; and its noblest use is by their examples to nourish in us a conviction, that elevated purity of motive and conduct is not a dream of fancy, but that it is placed within our reach, and is the very end of being.

"I have spoken of history as refuting the low conceptions which men form of their nature; but, without looking back to former ages, may not every individual, amidst the corruptions of present society, discover in his own sphere some delightful examples and illustrations of human goodness? Does he not discern some whose names are never to be inscribed on the rolls of earthly fame, and who can boast no distinction of intelligence or station, but whose sincere devotedness to God, whose gratitude in adversity, whose patience under injury, whose cheerful discharge of humble duties, whose unwearied zeal in doing good, afford a delightful proof of the connexion between the human and angelic nature? Let none, then, say that the corruptions of society forbid us to believe that our nature is susceptible of high advancement.

The road to perfection is not unexplored. We have forerunners in this path. We see the traces of many steps directed to immortality. Men of like passions with ourselves have subdued temptation. The good and great were not miracles in the moral world. We possess the same power, the same motives, the same heavenly guide, and the same promise of Divine assistance. . . . . .

"He who never looks up to an excellence higher than he has attained, who never regards himself as formed for pure and generous sentiments, who never admits the thought that exalted goodness is placed within his reach, will never put forth his powers in pursuit of virtue. He will never rise. He dooms himself to his present state. Exertion supposes that good may be attained, and vigorous exertion supposes that the mind is kindled by the prospect of great attainments. What can you expect from him who sees nothing in the future better than the past? On the other hand, a belief in the capacities and dignity of humanity, a belief of its future glory, a belief that higher excellence is the very end for which we were made, is a spring of generous and unwearied activity. This faith, when deeply fixed in the mind, is a pledge and earnest of the improvement to which it aspires. It awakens new power in the soul. It gives a natural dignity to the thoughts and actions, and produces an almost involuntary abstinence from all that is false and selfish.

"He who accustoms himself to reflect on Jesus Christ, on his apostles, on martyrs, on the best of men, on the loveliest and sublimest forms of humanity, who regards these high beings as his forerunners in the path of glory, and whose chief prayer is, that he may walk in their steps,—this man has learned the true secret of greatness. Though on earth, he has taken his place in a higher world. Blessed be God, these consoling and encouraging views are not only authorized by the gospel, but Jesus Christ came for this very end, to fix them in our minds, to make them the rule of our lives. His great object was to exalt us to true glory. His example was placed before us, not to create a transient emotion, but to show us to what height our nature may be raised."

1818. FORCE OF MORAL PURPOSE. "The Christian is known by the energy with which he wills to do right. It is his distinction, that his sense of religious duty, his moral principles, his purposes of virtue, predominate within him. He does not merely love what is good, but chooses it with power.

"We hear often of greatness of character. The only true greatness consists in unconquerable purpose of obedience to God. It consists in adhering with energy and courage to truth, duty, and honour. It consists in taking our rules of action from our own minds, enlightened by revelation, and following our deliberate convictions of right in the face of death and danger. It consists in asking ourselves, first, not what is expedient or safe, but what is generous, excellent, and acceptable to God; and in forming purposes of rectitude with a force which man and time and suffering cannot subdue. This holy energy of mind is the only true greatness, and it is a greatness not beyond the reach of our nature. . . . .

"The truly interesting portions of history are those which attest the moral power of man, which show us fellow-beings sustained by inward principle and confidence in God under the heaviest pressure of pain, which show us the mind unchanged in prosperity and adversity, passing unmoved through honour and disgrace, clinging to excellence when her only earthly dowry was death. Would we see our nature in its greatness, we must see it forsaken by all outward aids, compassed with obstacles, yet steadfast, gathering power from difficulty, and opposing a firmer front in proportion to the violence with which its principles are assailed.

"The true use of the trials and temptations of life, and of the turbulent passions in our own breasts, is to call forth spiritual energy and heroic purposes. God might have placed us in a world where duty and pleasure would have mingled and formed one current; but where would have been the discipline of virtue in such a world? Under such a constitution of things, our nature would have been free from sin; but whilst every stain would have been prevented, almost every bright trace of moral glory would have been dim. The crown would have fallen from the head of goodness. We are otherwise circumstanced;—we are placed now in a region of storms, perils, hardships; now in one of blandishments, seductions, snares. In such a world, would we be virtuous and make progress in religion, we must put forth our powers to choose the good and to love it entirely. The conscience must act with vigour. Excellence must be pursued earnestly. An inert purpose will avail us nothing. Our whole nature must be awake. Who does not see that such a world is fitted to form a higher order of minds than a

state removed from temptation? True, we must toil, but the harvest is rich. We must fight, but the strength we gain by conflict is an inestimable compensation. Here we have one explanation of our present state. We are tried as by fire, that we may come forth purer from the furnace. Our virtues are in peril, that we may hold them with a firmer grasp. This is the world for the formation of generous and resolute spirits. Let its purpose be in us fully accomplished. . . . .

"This force of principle gives, as it were, new power to the whole man. With this inward spring how much can we accomplish, how much endure! Sustained by a consciousness of rectitude, difficulties no longer daunt us, and hindrances sink before us. The minds of men are exceedingly weakened by inconsistent passions, by fear, interest, regard to opinion. They effect little, because they want *unity*. He who is accustomed to ask what is right, and to espouse it with energy, leaving the consequences with God, derives new power from his singleness of purpose. It gives him fearlessness of mind. His faculties, concentrated on his duties, act freely and strenuously; he perseveres where others would droop, and succeeds where they would fail. Right action, by being in itself simple and harmonious, brings an immediate reward in peace, equanimity, steadiness. Strong moral principle is a spring of honourable impulse, and gives us the highest use of all our faculties. . . . .

"Force of moral purpose makes us happy. Happiness does not consist, as men are too apt to imagine, in passive enjoyments. It is found in the strenuous use of our best affections. We enjoy most in putting forth our whole nature, in being fully alive to all scenes and relations, and especially in preserving our noblest faculties in healthy and efficient activity. There is a constant satisfaction attending the vigorous exercise of conscience, while a feeble operation of the moral principle, which shows us what is right, but gives no strength to perform it, is a source of constant misery. There is an exhilaration, a hope, a joy, springing up within us when we *will* with power what we see to be good, when we are conscious of treading under foot the low principles and interests which would part us from God and duty, when we sacrifice firmly and unreservedly selfish desires, or the world's favour, to the claims of Christian rectitude. Moral energy inspires an unconquerable resolution,

and fills us with a rare delight. The mind enlarges itself, and gains a new feeling of its capacities and destination, in these seasons of generous excitement, just as the body seems to gather new height and dimensions when a person is upborne by an exalted sentiment. The most exulting moments of life are those when, after a conflict of strong passion with the sense of duty, we come off conquerors, and are conscious that we have risen in spiritual existence. A feeling of this nature becomes in a degree habitual to the man, whose general tone of mind is a sincere purpose of adhering to the path of Christian virtue."

1816. SOURCES OF HAPPINESS. "The fatal error of multitudes is, that they hope to escape their present discontented, uneasy state of mind by improving their outward circumstances. They will not see that the spring of misery is within, that it is not in the power of all earthly objects combined to give them peace, until their minds are purified, their passions governed; until they have made their peace with God, and can look forward with some well-grounded hope to futurity. But though this error is a very common one, yet I cannot conceive a more obvious truth than this, that it is not the circumstances which surround a man, but the thoughts and feelings which are most familiar to his mind, on which his satisfaction depends. The true question as to happiness is not 'Where am I? In what state or rank do I exist?' but 'To what end is my mind directed? What objects have acquired the control of my affections?' . . . . . .

"Life is designed to form and prove our characters, to call forth our powers, to bring our virtues into acts, to put to the test our moral and religious principles, and thus to prepare us for higher states of being. *Happiness is God's end;* but it is future, not immediate happiness,—a happiness for which the foundation is to be laid in present improvement, which we are to earn by exertion, self-denial, and the voluntary exercise and habitual cultivation of the best affections of which our nature is capable."

1814. TRUE HAPPINESS. "The true happiness of man has its seat in the mind which God has breathed into us, in the enlargement of its powers, in the elevation of its sentiments, in the firmness and purity of its principles, in its ascent to its native heaven. Compared with the capacities of this imperishable principle, and with the means

of unfolding and exalting it, everything outward is worthless.

"The best of all the blessings which God gives to man is a heart alive to what is great and good, which glows at the sight of excellence, and kindles with desire to become one with what it admires. The best of all God's blessings is a heart which is accustomed to aspire to him as its source and destination, which is alive to his all-pervading presence, which meets him in his works, converses with him in solitude, blesses him in affliction, prays to him with the assurance of being heard, and hopes from him all which infinite goodness can bestow. The best of all blessings is a heart which partakes God's benevolence, which feels its relation to the universe, which is bound by friendship to the good, by sympathy to the afflicted, and by an overflowing tenderness to the narrow circle of domestic life. The best of all blessings is a heart which carries with it a consciousness of its unbounded destiny, which looks forward to eternity as its inheritance, which hopes for perfect goodness, which feels alliance with higher orders of beings, and anticipates a union with the spirits of the just made perfect, with departed friends, and with the ascended Saviour. In such a state of heart is the true happiness of man."

1814. PERFECT SOCIETY. "Perfect social happiness is reserved for a higher stage of existence. Fill as you ought your relations here, and you will rise to a better world, and be welcomed into a happier and purer community. But this is not all. It is very doubtful whether we should be the happier, if our social connexions were at present improved as much as we desire. We desire friends who will regard us with unremitting tenderness, in whose society we shall escape from every temptation, who would fly to our aid in every difficulty, to our rescue in every danger. The thought of such friends is indeed delightful; but in the present life we are not worthy of them, and I fear they would injure us by the very excess of their tenderness. They would probably keep us all our lives in a state of infantile dependence. Relying always on their aid, and shielded always by their care, we should attain no firmness of character, no courage, no proper self-dependence."

1821. TRUE BENEVOLENCE IS JUSTICE TO MAN'S WHOLE NATURE. "Man is not mere spirit, and that benevolence which should regard him as such, and in its zeal for his

mind neglect entirely his outward comfort, would be even more injudicious than that which spends itself exclusively in relieving animal suffering. True charity regards the *whole nature* of the being whom it would assist. Man's animal wants we must never neglect, under pretence of a refined and spiritual kindness, which can look at no good below the mind.

"But, on the other hand, we must not stop at securing outward good. For it is true that it is the mind which specially constitutes the man; and although want may be relieved, yet nothing worthy the name of happiness is communicated, unless the mind be benefited. One great reason why benevolence has not done more good is, that it has been too superficial, has confined itself too much to outward benefits, has not regarded man sufficiently as an intellectual and moral being, nor inquired how the welfare of such a being is to be advanced. And we can easily explain why kindness has thus preferred to labour for the outward and bodily, rather than the inward and spiritual, good of men; for benefits of the first class are promoted more easily and suddenly than those of the last, and are more apparent to the eye. We can see at once the effects of our bounty, when we put raiment on the naked, or give a shelter to those who are suffering from the cold. The care spent on the minds of the ignorant and bad does not yield so ready a harvest. The process of growth in the mind is not only unseen, but slow; and yet how permanent are the fruits of its culture! . . . . . .

"God's best gifts are those which he diffuses silently; and so it is with man's. The secret influence of a good man's example, and of a wise man's intelligence, which raises insensibly the hearts and minds of the circle and community in which they move, is worth more than any efforts of outward benevolence, though they might escape the notice of all except profound and judicious observers. . . . . .

"The noblest benevolence is that which operates on the mind, which seeks the happiness of men by contributing to their intellectual and moral advancement; and this is a great work, for the mind is a complex organization, having various powers, capacities, affections; and the true happiness of a man consists in the development of all. The mind is a whole as truly as the body; its health consists in a general action and progress, and it suffers from a partial culture as really, though not as sensibly, as the body would suffer, if

we were to aim to strengthen a single limb, and leave the other parts to pine. Man consists of reason, conscience, affection, will, and active powers, and all must conspire to form an harmonious, happy existence. The kindness which seeks to call them *all* forth is at once the most laborious and the most divine.

"These glorious capacities of human nature have as yet been but imperfectly unfolded; nor has the full development of them been made very much an object. In vast numbers of men, I may say in the great majority, the higher faculties on which happiness chiefly rests are almost locked up, and those who possess them have no consciousness of the immense resources, the divine gifts, which they carry in their hearts. Were we to visit a country where the greatest number of people were blind, deaf, palsied, we should look on them with deep compassion; but, to a reflecting man, a large part of the world now exhibits a scarcely less afflicting sight. Human nature is everywhere seen blind, deaf, palsied, as far as its highest and best faculties are concerned. . . . . .

"The idea of advancing men's happiness by such an extensive development and improvement of the moral and intellectual powers of human nature, as has now been suggested, may seem impracticable. But experience has already demonstrated, that much more intelligence can be spread through all classes than was once thought possible; and no man, who compares the world now with former periods, can doubt that a vastly larger measure of knowledge, clearer and nobler ideas of duty, and higher views of religion, than are now met with, except in persons of the very first order of minds and the purest character, can gradually be thrown into general circulation, and infused into men's minds through all classes of society. *Society grows as truly as the individual*, and is becoming ripe for higher instructions than were given in its childhood. We are too apt to settle down in the present state of things, as if it were immutable, as if human nature had reached its ultimate point of progression, when in fact the springs of human improvement gain strength by use, and every advance makes future ones more easy. Revelation encourages the most generous hopes and efforts, for it clearly points to a higher condition of the human race than has yet been reached; and that this is to be promoted by man's instrumentality, God's past dispensations compel us to believe."

1814. HAPPINESS OF PROGRESS. "Progression and happiness are intimately connected. To rise perpetually to virtue by our own exertions, to look back on the path through which we have ascended, to raise an eye of hope to brighter eminences,—these constitute a higher felicity than perpetual uniformity of any mode of bliss. Now, if progression thus heightens happiness, is there not an advantage in beginning existence in our present very low condition? Were I to indulge myself in conjecture, I should imagine that archangels commenced their course in circumstances as humble as our own, so great appears to me the joy of progress and contrast, of passing through successive stages of existence, of gathering the knowledge which each furnishes, and of experiencing the providence of God, which all conspire to illustrate. Thus our present imperfection is no objection to Divine goodness. . . . .

"We often hear complaints of the feebleness, darkness, and errors of the human mind. 'Why are we not introduced at once to all the truth which we are capable of receiving?' it is asked. Now, that ignorance is in some respects an evil, is granted. But we should remember, that, were everything known to us at first, all pleasure of discovery would be at an end. The charm of novelty would fade and vanish. The mind could only revolve familiar ideas. Are we sure that we should be gainers in the end? To our ignorance we owe the delight of surprise, the ardour of curiosity, the fresh wonders of early instruction, and the satisfaction of continually adding, if we please, to our store of knowledge. We are ignorant; but what a magnificent school is the creation in which our Father has placed us! How much is there on every side to learn, and what motives and aids are given us to the enlargement of our views!

1815. INDICATIONS OF IMMORTALITY. "In the inexhaustible love of knowledge which animates the human understanding we have a bright indication of the reality of a future existence. God has given to man a spirit which is evidently designed to expand through the universe, which disdains the confinement of space, and which, although for ages it has been making progress in the knowledge of nature, still thirsts for more extended information. There is a restlessness in the human mind which no acquisition can allay. Thought is for ever enlarging its horizon.

"Were man destined to live only in this world, his desires

and powers would have been fitted wholly for this world, and his capacities would have been limited to the means of present enjoyment. But his faculties are now continually overleaping the bounds of earth; he delights in discoveries which have no relation to his existence on this planet; he calls to his aid the arts, not merely to render life comfortable, but to assist him in the most remote researches; invents instruments which extend his sight beyond these visible heavens, and reveal hidden stars and systems; and presses on and on to fathom the profoundest secrets of the universe. The human mind has an intense delight in what is vast and unexplored. Does such a mind carry with it no proof that it is destined to wider spheres of experience than earth affords, —that it is designed to improve for ever in the knowledge of God's wonderful works?

"In man's power of looking forward with hope to distant and everlasting ages, we have a second clear mark of a being destined to another existence. Were this world everything to man, his longings would not stray beyond its brief span. His anticipations would be proportioned to his being. Of what use, except to torment him, would be the idea of eternity to a creature of time? Why kindle in man the sublime sentiment of immortality, if the grave is to be his doom? . . . . .

"Our capacity of knowing God is another indication that we are appointed to future modes of being. The human mind is not limited to objects of sense. It has a relish for the unseen. It for ever tends to rise from the effect to the cause—from creation to its Author. This tendency may be pronounced one of the essential, instinctive principles of our nature.

"Nor is this desire of acquaintance with God slight and transient. The human mind, by cultivation of pious sentiments, may be, and often has been, raised to an intimate union with the Divine Being, to a vivid feeling of his presence, to an habitual discernment of him in his works and providence. It has attained to sentiments of sacred rapture, to more than earthly joy, in praising, adoring, thanking him; and just in proportion as the heart is the abode of these generous emotions, it desires a nearer approach to the Divinity, and longs for an improved condition, in which He may be worshipped with pure and perfect love. When a mind has thus become alive to God, it clings to existence with increasing earnestness. It cannot endure the thought of being

blotted out from among God's works,—of being deprived of the consciousness of his perfections,—of losing for ever his friendship,—of rendering him no more service. Piety necessarily takes this form of desire for near communion with the Infinite Being in a future, better, endless existence; and what do all these aspirations indicate?

"We have another indication of man's future life in the moral sensibility which God has imparted to the soul.

"The human mind, notwithstanding its degradation, has something in it congenial with excellence. It delights to hear and read of angelic worth and greatness of character. It loves to conceive of more perfect forms of human nature than real life exhibits. To this propensity, poetry and fiction are indebted for their origin. Especially when the mind has been refined by the practice of goodness, does it naturally represent to itself a beauty of virtue such as has never been attained on earth. It is dissatisfied with all that it has gained, and pants for greater purity. Its very improvements prompt it to desire a better existence, where present stains and imperfections will be done away, where it will fill a wider sphere of usefulness, where it may be united with the excellent whom it loves, and become worthy of their friendship. This delight in goodness, this thirst for perfection, with which the human mind is instinct, is full of promise. Were this life everything to us, would God have formed us thus capable of conceiving and desiring heights of excellence which in this life are unattainable? Will he crush the hope of moral progress, to which our very virtues give intenseness? . . . . .

"The man of refinement and sensibility finds himself, as it were, in accordance with universal nature. Every scene, every season, touches some spring in his heart. The stream, the mountain, the ocean, the clouds, the distant constellations, all speak to him in a language that he understands. There is something in him akin to all this beauty and sublimity, which gives him a claim to property in the whole creation. There is especially in the soul a sensibility to the grand, awful scenes of nature. Whatever bears the impress of infinite majesty, whatever is too vast to be grasped by the senses, brings to the heart a mysterious delight. The storm, the thunder, and raging ocean, fearful as they are, still awaken a solemn pleasure, for they speak to us of almighty power, and accord with our love of greatness. Now this sensibility to whatever is great and fair in universal nature,

seems to attest the glory of the human soul, and to point out to it a sublime destiny. Why has God placed man amidst this boundless theatre, revealed around him this endless creation, touched his heart with the love of beauty, and given him this delightful and awful interest in all that meets his eye, if he is merely a creature of the earth, soon to shut his eyes on these majestic scenes, and to be buried for ever in a narrow grave? Does this love of the infinite, this attachment to the universe, seem suitable to so frail a nature? Do they not suggest the idea of a being who belongs to the universe, and who is to fill an ever-widening sphere? . . . .

"I now proceed to another and a more decisive indication of a future life, which is furnished us by human nature. I refer to the capacity which man actually possesses of attaining to greatness of character.

"Whilst man falls far below the perfection he desires, he yet is sometimes seen to ascend to a sublimity of virtue which does honour to our nature, and proves that it is formed for heaven. We shall discover in history persons not merely faithful in their regard to the prescribed duties of life, but who are filled with a grand disinterestedness of character, a sublime goodness, which outstrips what is positively demanded, which is prodigal of service to God and man, and overflows with sacrifices and sufferings in the cause of duty.

"These great examples show us what man may become, and what he is designed to be. These are lineaments of a noble nature, marks of a sublime capacity, a sublime destiny. We all have sometimes seen our nature manifested in these honourable forms, have seen great temptations and calamities calling forth great virtues, have seen the human countenance bright with the expression of magnanimous affections, and have felt how lovely and how glorious may be humanity. And can we believe that the soul of man, gifted with such capacities, is created for a day? Can we think that the great men who have thrown such light on the past were but meteors, extinguished as soon as kindled,—extinguished in the midst of their glory? Why were such sublime capacities given to a being of such an humble destiny? Does the all-wise Creator thus waste his noblest gifts, and is he so unconcerned for those on whom these gifts have been conferred? It is a natural sentiment, entitled to respect, that exalted goodness cannot perish. It is fitted for a better world than this, and the Creator would be dishonoured were his noblest work to be

lost. Nature may pass away, but can goodness, sublime goodness, that image of God, be destroyed? And if human nature be capable of this goodness, is it not destined to immortality?

"Another indication of a future state suggested by our nature, is to be found in the triumph which man often obtains over death, in the manner in which he passes through the last change.

"To the sensible appearances of death, so sad and appalling, we should do well to oppose the energy of soul with which it is often encountered. Then death itself will furnish us with a proof of immortality. Sometimes the hour of death is an hour of peculiar glory for human nature. Instead of being conquered, man is seen to conquer the last foe; and he seems to suffer only that the greatness of humanity may be developed. In instances like these, the last act of the soul is an assertion of its immortality. Can we believe that this moment of sublime virtue is the moment of annihilation,—that the soul is extinguished when its beauty is most resplendent? If God intended that death should be an eternal extinction, would it be adorned, as it often is, with a radiance of the noblest, loveliest sentiments and affections of our nature? Would the greatest triumph of man be the harbinger of his ruin?

"There is another view yet more sublime. I refer to the death of the martyr to religion, to his country, to the cause of truth and human improvement. You have read of men who preferred death to desertion of duty. They encountered the menaces of power, they endured the gloom of prisons, and at length, in the fulness of their powers, were led to the place of execution. Their steps never faltered, their purpose never trembled, their looks were firm, yet mild and forgiving, and with unshaken trust in God they counted it an honour to suffer in his cause. And what now shall we say of death? That it triumphed over these men of unsubdued virtue,—that it quenched these bright spirits? Or shall we rather say that it was designed to illustrate the immortal energy of piety and virtue, and to show that the faithful soul is more than conqueror over the last foe? Can we think that God impels those who love him by the best principle in their nature to encounter death in its most dreadful forms, and then abandons them to final extinction, at

the very moment when they must be to him most worthy of his love?

"We find another indication of immortality in our nature, when we consider the principal source of human enjoyment. I ask, then, what is this principal source of human enjoyment?

"A slight observation will teach us that happiness is derived chiefly from activity, from conscious growth, from the successful effort to improve our powers, from rising by our own energy to an improved condition. It is not what we have already gained, be it knowledge, property, reputation, or virtue, which constitutes our happiness, so much as the exertion of our faculties in further acquisitions. The idea of advancement is of all others the most congenial with the human mind. We delight not so much in possession as in pursuit, not so much in holding the prize as in pressing forward to seize it with the eye of hope. The feeling of progress is the great spring of happiness; and it is this which gives cheerfulness and animation under the severest lot.

"Now what does such a nature indicate? It is true that man's chief happiness consists in animated pursuit, in consciousness of improvement,—that, when his advancement is most swift and sure, this principle most prompts him to press forward? Is not *perfection*, then, the end of his being? Is he not made to advance, to ascend, for ever? and does not this soaring nature discover a being designed for a for-ever brightening career? Would this insatiable thirst for progress have been given to a creature of a day, whose powers are to perish just when beginning to unfold, and whose attainments are to be buried with him in eternal oblivion? . . . . .

"If this world were our home, and our only portion, should we have sentiments implanted by our Creator which teach us to live above it, and impel us to feel that it is noble to renounce it? Were this our only sphere of enjoyment, could we ever deem it beneath us, unworthy our nature?

"But this is not all; we not only honour men when they rise above the world, its pleasures and gains—we particularly revere them when they hold life itself with a degree of indifference, when they disdain it in comparison with principle, and advance to meet seeming destruction by a resolute and unshaken adherence to principle. On the other hand, we feel

a contempt for those who cling to life as the best of blessings. We cannot endure the coward, while we are lenient even towards the excess of courage. We view with admiration the man who is prodigal of life in an honourable cause, and who prefers death to the least stain of guilt. Now these feelings surely indicate that the present is not our whole existence. Were this life everything to us, should we be so constituted as to consider the voluntary relinquishment of it as the noblest deed? Should we have feelings which impel us to cast it away? Were death entire and eternal extinction of all our power and virtue, would the welcoming of it appear the height of glory? All these feelings which I have considered, and which prompt us to sacrifice the world and life to the purity of the soul, are so many attestations from God to the dignity of the soul, so many assurances that it is destined for higher relations than those which it now sustains to the body and the world."

1814. GREATNESS OF HUMAN NATURE, AS REVEALED BY JESUS CHRIST. "Consider the discoveries which Jesus Christ has made of the glory of human nature. His gospel may be said to be *a revelation of man to himself*. It calls us home to our own hearts, and there discloses to us capacities which should awaken the profoundest gratitude and admiration. The great unhappiness of men is, that they live abroad, they lose themselves in the accidents around, they are engrossed by outward events, by the changes of the natural or political world. They do not explore the grander world within.

"Jesus Christ thought nothing worthy of his notice but the soul of man; and the whole tone of his gospel is, that the soul is capable of all that is great and excellent, that it may become the image of God, that it may ascend to the glory and purity of angels. It is constantly his doctrine, that man is appointed to join the society of heaven, and that he will there shine as the sun, that he will exchange his present imperfection for spotless purity. As in the child we view the future man, so in man we are taught by the gospel to view the germ of the future angel. We are taught that there is no height of excellence in the universe to which the human mind in the progress of eternity may not attain. These are views which have little to interest him who never reflects on his inward nature, who only feels that he has a body and organs of sense, and who thinks the highest happiness is to

be found in the gratifications of the brute. But there are those who feel conscious of the heavenly principle within them; who, at the sight of distinguished virtue, pant to attain to its resemblance, who kindle at the thought of a boundless progression, of a never-ending ascent towards God. To such persons, how delightful is the confirmation which the gospel gives to the wishes and aspirations of their better nature! What a splendour is thrown round human nature, when it is thus viewed as the future associate of all that is most excellent in heaven, as the bright reflection of the glorious goodness of the Creator!"

SECTION THIRD.

CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY.

1815. THE END OF CHRISTIANITY. "This idea, that the great end of Christianity, of the mission of Jesus, is to exalt the human character, although it runs through the Scriptures, has been very much overlooked. Christians have been inclined to believe that Christ lived and died to influence the mind of God, rather than the mind of man—to make God favourable to us, rather than to make us obedient to God.

"I cannot but believe that this is a very erroneous view, and utterly unauthorized by the Scriptures. The Scriptures, I think, lead us to believe that holiness, or excellence of character, is a vastly greater blessing than pardon or forgiveness. According to the Scriptures, it is a greater privilege to be delivered from the polluting power than from the consequences of sin. According to the Scriptures, holiness, goodness, virtue, is the pearl of great price. It is God himself dwelling in the human heart. It is heaven enjoyed on earth.

"There is no happiness but in goodness. This is the felicity of God, and this is the best gift he imparts to his creatures. The noblest work of God is a holy, pure, virtuous mind; and Jesus Christ can perform no ministry more noble than the recovering of a sinful mind to a heavenly state."

1817. THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST. "Our religion demands of us, not merely single acts and feelings, but a character or general frame of mind. We must have Christ's *spirit*, which means his temper; or, in other words, we must have an habitual state of the soul answering to our Lord's. . . . . .

"The great principle, which runs through, and binds together all parts of the Christian system is this—that our happiness, our eternal happiness, depends on the character we form. Men are very apt to forget, that in everything but religion they estimate one another, not by occasional acts, but by the general frame of the mind. There is such a thing, we all know, as *character*, something very different from particular actions and occasional feelings, something prominent in the mind, and which works itself into almost all the life. Character is not something which we put on at one moment and put off at another, not something reserved for great occasions, or which appears only in striking actions. It influences the common decisions of the judgment. It gives a peculiar form to the common opinions and purposes of the individual, and, still more, it pervades the whole mind. . . . . .

"Jesus Christ did not come to work upon the surface of the human heart, but to pervade it with his religion; he did not come to inculcate transient feelings and actions, but to implant permanent principles, to give a new life to the soul. It is well, it is necessary, that we should know the large demands of his gospel, so as not to lose its blessings by stopping at low attainments—so as to propose seriously the acquisition of that devout, benevolent, and heavenly temper, which is the very essence of his religion. We cannot be too sensible that to be a Christian is a great work. If we do not rightly estimate the difficulties of our task, how can we apply to it with perseverance, resolution, spirit, and success? We have to incorporate Christian principles into our very souls. We have an inward conflict to sustain, a glorious change to accomplish, by God's assistance, in that mind which is most properly ourselves."

1819. CHRIST'S HUMBLE MODE OF LIFE. "We represent Jesus Christ to ourselves as the most august being who ever moved on the earth. He is separated in our thoughts from all other men. His unparalleled birth, his cross, his resurrection, his ascension, and his future glorious appearing to judge the world, are all blended in our minds; and when we read a passage in his history, it is this peculiar being, in whom so many splendours meet, and whose humanity is lost in his superhuman power and exaltation, who speaks, acts, and makes himself known to us. In this way we forget how he really appeared to his contemporaries. It is true, we

speak of his poverty. We hear that moving declaration,—'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head;' still, the imagination is too accustomed to other views to conceive of the truth clearly and with force.

"I suspect, too, that we are most of us influenced more or less by the representations which painters have given of the events of Christ's life. In these, our Master is placed before us with a glory round his head, in a flowing and often splendid robe, his countenance singularly fair, as if the rough winds had not visited it, and his attitude studiously majestic and commanding. In other words, the artist labours to represent in Jesus ideal beauty and grandeur. Through the eye the imagination is more influenced than by reading. Our conceptions of the Saviour when on earth are taken from such delineations. But the views of Jesus which are very plainly given us in the New Testament present an image of his appearance very different from what our imaginations, aided by these outward delineations, usually form. Let us see the facts as they were, by means of a familiar illustration. Suppose, then, my friends, that there should appear on our exchange a young man of thirty years of age, in the dress of a labourer, from an obscure and distant village, accompanied by a small number of peasants and fishermen, to whose houses he was in the habit of repairing for food and lodging. I would have you bring this illustration home. It will help you to conceive of the impression made by Jesus, especially at first sight, on those who personally knew him."

1817. LOVE FOR JESUS CHRIST. "There is a wonderful combination of affecting circumstances in the history of Jesus Christ. His original glory, which he had with the Father before the world, was, his humiliation in taking on him human nature, his unbounded attachment to mankind, the sustained labour of his life, the patience of his sufferings, his unconquerable love amidst ingratitude and outrage, his blood shed for us, and his sublime triumphs over death,—these are elements which combine to form the loveliest and most exalted character toward which human thought was ever turned. History and society offer us individuals marked by high virtues, and the happiness of conversing with and loving them is among our most exquisite enjoyments. But Jesus leaves behind him at an immeasurable distance the great and good of this world, whether we regard the vastness of his

purposes, or the disinterestedness and fervour of his benevolence. It is a great excellence of the gospel, that it reveals to us such a character as Jesus. Its blessings are heightened by flowing to us through a friend and deliverer so suited to awake our best sensibilities. The Christian finds in Jesus Christ a source of perpetual delight. No history interests him like the gospel. His heart often burns as he reads the labours, and sufferings, and virtues of his Lord. How often does his mind turn with a mixture of tenderness and admiration to his cross, and with what delight does he welcome him risen from the dead! He thinks of heaven with a new interest, as the place where he shall meet his friend and express to him his thankfulness. . . . .

"The Christian, conversing with an excellence descended from heaven, which is untainted by the sordidness and imperfection of all human virtue, acquires a relish for eminent purity; instructed as he is, that this lovely model is placed before him for the very purpose of forming him to perfection, he cannot be satisfied without a consciousness of approaching it. . . . . .

"The Christian finds a holy life accompanied by a peculiar pleasure. It is a life not urged on him by a stranger, or by an equal, but by the voice of a heavenly friend. The Sermon on the Mount is not merely a collection of admirable precepts, but the affectionate exhortation of his crucified, risen, and glorified Redeemer. The difficulties of obedience are mitigated, self-denial is sweetened, by the consideration that he is following such a master.

"These remarks show the erroneousness of a sentiment which has sometimes been expressed, and has lurked in minds which have not uttered it, that strong affection towards Jesus Christ is not of primary importance,—that our views and feelings in regard to him, however low, are sufficiently elevated,—that our chief business is to obey his precepts, and that, if these are obeyed, the great object of his mission is secured. But how obvious is the sentiment, that obedience to Christ's precepts is intimately connected with high conceptions of his character, and with strong affection towards him! Will not the heart which is most accustomed to meditate upon the greatness of Christ's goodness feel most the obligation of his law of love? Will not the mind which regards him, not only as a prophet, but as a Saviour, by whose mediation and sufferings God has been pleased to

redeem the world, which is touched and softened by his character and near relation to the human race,—will not such a mind be peculiarly prompted to a cheerful service, to an animated obedience?"

1819. CHRIST'S LOVE FOR MAN. "It is not possible for us to conceive fully the love of Christ, because his state before entering the world is known imperfectly, and of course the greatness of the sacrifice which he made for us, and which is the best measure of love, cannot be estimated.

"There are, you well know, several passages of Scripture which, if literally taken, teach that Christ existed before he came into the world. And we have this very sufficient reason for interpreting these passages literally, that his whole character and the offices which he bears imply a more than human dignity. In the first place, Jesus Christ spoke and acted as if he was more than man,—as if he was conscious of superiority to all around him. There is a dignity, an authority, about him altogether peculiar, and such, I think, as would not have been becoming in a mere man, in his intercourse with brethren essentially his equals. The spotless purity of Jesus is another broad line of distinction between himself and all other men, something not to be explained by difference of circumstances or education. To be absolutely sinless is to be that which human nature never was before, and never has been since the time of Christ, and which is not to be expected in a mere human being in the present life. Finally, consider the offices which Jesus sustained, of Saviour of the world, the One Mediator between God and man, the Prince of Life, who is to raise the dead and to judge mankind,—do these offices appear to be compatible with simple humanity? Do they belong to a being who himself needs a mediator, who himself has sins to be pardoned? For this must have been true of Christ, if he was a mere man. I have just glanced at a few considerations which tend to prove a more than human greatness in Jesus Christ, and which seem to me to require that we should interpret literally the passages in which he is said to have come down from heaven, and to have had a glory with the Father before the world was.

"Jesus Christ, then, existed before he came into the world, and in a state of great honour and felicity. He was known, esteemed, beloved, revered, in the family of heaven. He was intrusted with the execution of the most sublime pur-

poses of his Father. He is spoken of as the highest intelligent being next to Him who is the fountain and source of all, and he was in happiness as in glory the most express image of God. These views, which seem to me to be warranted by the Scriptures, show us a strength of love beyond expression in the entrance of Jesus Christ into this world, to live and to die a man of sorrows. We have here a sacrifice for the well-being of mankind to which nothing in our experience furnishes a parallel. . . . .

"If the dignity of Christ were such as we have supposed, then the history of the universe contains no manifestation of pure, devoted love so stupendous as his; and angels, who knew the Saviour in his brightness and joy, must have received from his humiliation and suffering an impression of what charity can perform and endure, such as no other transaction can have given. I repeat it,—the greatness of Christ's love cannot be adequately known, until we shall know hereafter the height from which he came to our rescue, the glory of which he divested himself, the riches which he parted with, to become poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. We can, however, understand something, even here, of this love. The fact, that such a being was attracted to us by our miseries, that through the power of love he came to take upon him our griefs, and exchanged heaven for the cross,—this fact is a revelation of generous affection, brighter than the sun; and, if believed, it ought to work in us more powerfully than all other events. . . . .

"To feel the strength of Christ's benevolence whilst he was on earth, we must consider that it received no aid from any persons around him. It is comparatively easy to cherish a sentiment which operates in every other breast, to reflect a light which shines strongly on every side. But the benevolence of Christ received no accession from sympathy. The fountain of this living water was within himself. He drew his love from his own will. The age in which he lived had no thought of a benevolence so purified, extended, and disinterested as his. It was a selfish, exclusive, bigoted age. The characters of the most improved were narrowed and debased by prejudice. Jesus Christ is seen to have been a lonely being, even among his disciples, when the tone and temper of his mind are considered. No one felt like him, or could lend fervour to his charity. His love cannot but impress us, when we thus consider how solitary, how unbor-

rowed it was, how it resisted every social influence and example, in how full a river it flowed through a parched land, from which it received no tributary stream.

"To feel as we ought the love of Christ, we should consider also its extent. In reading his history, we see it spreading over the whole face of society, comprehending all orders of men, and embracing every human relation and interest. His love did not owe its strength, as ours too often does, to its limitation. The current was not powerful because hemmed in. It was not a close circle, within which his affection glowed to intenseness. He felt that the world was his home, and there was a prodigal liberality in his affection. He could not be happy but in expanding his sympathy to the whole range of man's wants and sorrows. There was no class of human beings beneath his notice. If he preferred any in regard, it was the poor and forsaken; precisely because they needed most a friend and benefactor. The place of instruction in which he seemed to take particular pleasure was the open air, where all might hear him. His charity, like that light to which he often compared himself, fell on all. It spread from the little child to the ends of the earth. It blessed individuals who were near him, and at the same time reached the most remote nations and ages. In the same breast dwelt the tenderness of a son for an amiable mother, and the vast charity of the Saviour of the world. His benevolence partook at once the character of the stream which winds through the valley, and of the mighty ocean which connects all lands.

"Again, to perceive the strength of Christ's love during his ministry on earth, we must remember that he carried with him a consciousness of his immense superiority to all around. He was not a man moving among equals. He remembered the glory he had left, and to which he was to return. The wisest and best around him must have appeared to him like children. There were none in whose society he could find the refreshment and pleasure which we derive from equal and congenial minds. Now it is when men are surrounded by inferiors, that their pride, contempt, impatience, and weariness perpetually break forth. What a striking proof, then, of the benevolence of Jesus is it, that, so far from exhibiting indifference or contempt, he was distinguished by a lowly and gentle sweetness of deportment! His dignity was so softened by meek and tender feeling, that

his disciples approached him with familiarity, lived with him as a friend, and felt no pain in his presence. We should have expected that a being so august, and whose works were so wonderful, would have struck awe into men's minds; but the amiableness of Jesus seems to have triumphed over his greatness, and to have inspired affection even stronger than reverence. We see this illustrated in every part of his history; in John's lying on his bosom, in Mary's anointing his head, and in the deep and tender grief with which his disciples, after his death, came to embalm his remains. When I consider this conscious superiority of Jesus, I cannot express my conception of the strength of his benevolence, as displayed in the affectionate familiarity with which he lived among men, in the gentleness and condescension of his manner, in his hiding his majesty behind his compassion. It is far easier to scatter blessings than to stoop to the low and to live with them as a friend. The Son of God walking amidst the band of his disciples as an equal, sitting at their table, inviting to it the publican, and conversing with all he met on the highway and in the palace with like sympathy and interest, displays to my mind a charity stronger than when he employed his power to raise the dead. In every act and relation of common life, we see that his very life and spirit was benignity."

1817. CHRIST A MEDIATOR. "The sentiment which I wish to enforce is this,—that Jesus Christ is continually, in all ages, in all times, employed and interested in behalf of the human race,—that his kindness to mankind is constantly operating,—that he bears a permanent relation to them,—that he never ceases to do good.

"It is to be feared that these conceptions are not sufficiently familiar. Many, when they think of Christ, think of him only, or chiefly, as having lived several ages ago. Their minds travel back to the time when he dwelt on earth. They conceive of him very much as a teacher or prophet who brought an important message from God, and, having declared it, died in attestation of it, and then left the world to enter into a state of reward and rest. Jesus Christ is thus separated from us, and thrown back into a distant antiquity. Without being distinctly avowed, this is with many the most habitual and frequent mode of regarding Christ, and it is one cause of the faint interest often manifested in his character. . . . .

"Such a view of Christ, when no higher views are connected with it, will not take a strong hold on men of improved and cultivated minds. They will not feel that their obligations to Christ are great, when he is regarded only as a prophet of early times; and the reason is, that, from their early familiarity with the leading truths of his gospel, and from their habit of reasoning about these truths, they come to think that they might have learned these without his aid. You well know that, since the time of Jesus, the human mind has been much employed in seeking for evidences in Nature, of many interesting doctrines which he taught. The consequence is, that a system of Natural Religion has been constructed. We have works of the learned, in which God's unity and goodness, and a future state of retribution, are supported, and, we are sometimes told, are demonstrated, by proof drawn from the creation and providence. Now, the effect of this mode of appeal to Nature in defence of these truths is, to lead men to the notion that Nature is a sufficient witness to these doctrines, and that the authority of Christ may be spared. Jesus seems to them to have conferred no signal benefit in teaching doctrines which are written on every page of God's works. But it is forgotten that it is by the light which Christ has thrown on Nature that they are enabled to read it with so much ease. It is forgotten that, before his time, philosophers hesitated, wavered, doubted, about these simple truths of religion, as they are now termed. It is forgotten that philosophy had not taken a step towards subverting idolatry.

"Hence the more cultivated become insensible to their obligations to Christ, when viewed as a mere teacher of an early age. Hence it is not uncommon to hear Nature arrayed against Christ, to hear Nature referred to as a higher authority than Christ, to see his instructions virtually set aside, when they do not correspond with what is asserted to be the doctrine of Nature, although before his coming she had taught so little—although it is his gospel which has given her a tongue. I have intended by these remarks to show, that the habit of thinking of Christ merely or chiefly as a teacher, who lived several ages ago, and left behind him an excellent system of religious truth, is not suited to excite a strong interest in him—certainly not such an interest, not such a sensibility, as pervades the New Testament.

"I would now observe, that this mode of viewing Christ

is wrong, defective, inconsistent with the plain declaration of the Scriptures. According to these, Jesus Christ is not a teacher whose agency was chiefly confined to the time when he was on earth. *He ever lives and is ever active for mankind.* He sustains other offices than those of a teacher; he is Mediator, Intercessor, Lord, and Saviour. He has a permanent and constant connexion with mankind, and a most intimate union with his church. He is through all time, now as well as formerly, the active and efficient friend of the human race.

"When Jesus spoke of his death, he never spoke of it as if it were to separate him from the concerns of our world, as if he were to rest from his efforts for mankind. He regarded it as an event which was to introduce him to a nobler and wider sphere of activity, where he was to contribute more extensively to the conversion and salvation of mankind. 'I go to prepare a place for you.' 'When I am lifted up,' that is, crucified, 'I will draw all men to me.' After his resurrection, he did not speak as if his work had been finished by dying and rising again. He says, 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth. Lo! I am with you to the end of the world.'

"According to the Scriptures, Christ, the Son of God, as a reward for his humiliation, labour, and sufferings for mankind, is now exalted to universal empire. Angels are subjected to him. Nature is subjected to him. He is present by his knowledge and power with his church. He never forgets the race for which he died. He intercedes for them. He assists them. He watches over the interests of his religion. He will make it victorious. According to the Scriptures, the time is coming when his influence, now silent, will be conspicuous; when the veil behind which he operates will be withdrawn. He is to come with hosts of angels. He is to raise the dead, to judge the world, to fulfil the solemn threatenings, and to confer the everlasting blessings of his gospel.

"This connexion of Jesus Christ with the human race seems to me very clearly unfolded in Scripture, and though it is astonishing by its vastness, yet it is in no respect incredible. That God should choose to save and bless a race of beings by the agency of an illustrious deliverer, is only an exemplification of that system which is established in nature, under which we see God committing the preservation and

happiness of a large family to a parent, of a large kingdom to a sovereign. Connexions and dependencies of this nature are peculiarly adapted to call forth an exalted benevolence, and the strongest and best affections of the soul. God might have raised mankind by an immediate act of power from sin and death. But it is more consistent with his character, and with his usual modes of operation, to assign this work to an exalted being capable of accomplishing it, and to place this being in the most interesting relations to our world.

"Is it now asked, 'Why are these views important?' I answer, they give a new complexion to the mind which truly imbibes them. They are not mere speculative principles. They are suited to move and actuate the soul to its centre, to have a powerful operation on the affections and the life, and therefore they should often be revolved. The heart which is truly imbued with them, rises to Christ with a grateful and affectionate veneration which is felt for no earthly friend. There is something peculiarly affecting in the idea of a love, a philanthropy, living and operating through ages, and looking down from heaven with an unbroken tenderness on a race like ours. . . . . .

"I close with observing, that a mind conversant with these views of Christ acquires a vigour of hope, and a fulness of joy, which can be derived from no other source. Our hope of the heavenly world is nourished by no views so effectually as by these. That world, so pure, so distant, so unseen, though believed by us to exist, is not easily conceived of as designed to be our future dwelling. It is by bringing it home to the heart, that Jesus is there, that Jesus in our nature is there, that he is there as a friend, and forerunner, and advocate—it is by cherishing these views that heaven is brought nigh to us, that hope acquires courage and strength to ascend to that pure and eternal state. It is possible, by the aid which these views of Christ can give, to obtain a conviction of the future glory of human nature, altogether different from that vague and cold belief which the multitude possess,—a conviction which partakes of the vividness of immediate perception."

1816. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. "Christ came to establish an empire of benevolence, peace, charity, on the ruins of malice, war, and discord. The work of diffusing goodwill through a world of free and voluntary agents, must of neces-

sity be gradual, and, like all the great purposes of God, must advance with a slow and silent progress. But this work has been in a degree accomplished by Jesus; and what is more, there is a very remarkable adaptation in his whole character to this office of spreading peace on earth—such an adaptation as proves him to be the predicted *Pacificator of the World*. . . . . .

"At the thought of this reign of benevolence, the whole earth seems to me to burst forth into rejoicing. I see the arts and civilization spreading gladness over deserted regions, and clothing the wilderness with beauty. Nations united in a league of philanthropy, advance with constantly accelerating steps in knowledge and power. I see stupendous plans accomplished, oceans united, distant regions connected, and every climate contributing its productions and treasures to the improvement and happiness of the race. In private life, I see every labour lightened by mutual confidence and aid. Indigence is unknown. Sickness and pain are mitigated, and almost disarmed, by the disinterestedness of those who suffer, and by the sympathy which suffering awakens. Every blessing is heightened and diffused by participation. Every family, united, peaceful, and knowing no contention but for pre-eminence in doing good, is a consecrated and happy retreat, the image of heaven. The necessary evils of life shrink into nothing. The human countenance puts on a new and brighter expression. Human nature with its selfishness loses its base deformity, and is clothed with the glory of God, whose designs it embraces, with whose spirit it is imbued.

"Let us, then, welcome Jesus, the Prince of Peace, who came with this spirit from heaven. Let us welcome Jesus, whose gospel has already obtained so many conquests over selfishness and malignity, and brought to reign in so many hearts the principle of charity."

SECTION FOURTH.

SOCIETY.

1814. DANGERS OF FREE INSTITUTIONS. "One of the great benefits of a republican government is, that it admits the elevation of the best men to power. In hereditary governments, the people have no pledge that the crown will not be worn by the worst and weakest men in society

But 'a republic,' we are told, 'opens wide the door of honour and office to merit,—no artificial distinctions are there employed to depress virtue and wisdom, and superior talent has at once the means of development and reward. How great, then, is the prospect that, in a republic, the power of the state will be confided to the wise and good!' . . . . .

"The privilege of electing rulers is indeed invaluable; but who does not see, in a moment, that this privilege will be a blessing or a curse, according to the character of the community? Let a people be corrupt, and who will be their favourite,—the uncorrupted patriot, the man of inflexible principle, too upright to flatter bad passions and to promise subservience to unworthy views, or the subtle, specious, demagogue, who pants for power, and disdains no art by which it may be acquired? Bad men, of all others, are most greedy of political power, for they see in power, not only the gratification of ambition, but food for their avarice, and all their passions; and in a corrupt state of the community, what can preserve the reins of government from their unholy grasp? Depraved themselves, they understand the depraved feelings of others, and can bend every popular passion to their service. To the mercenary they exhibit the allurements of office; to the envious they promise a triumph over their superiors; to the discontented and restless, a removal of fancied or exaggerated grievances. A corrupt state of society is the very element for the artful and aspiring. Unfettered by principle and inflamed by the prospect of success, they pursue power with an energy which no labour can exhaust, no disappointment repress, and on which better men look with astonishment. Better men are too much inclined to shrink in despair from a conflict with these unscrupulous spirits. They cannot stoop, they say, to artifice and falsehood. They cannot purchase office by the sacrifice of uprightness, by communion with the worst members and worst feelings of society. What have they, then, to hope from this desperate struggle with the depraved, but envenomed and unceasing abuse, and a final defeat, more fatal the longer it has been deferred? Such reflections too often paralyze the efforts of the wise and upright, and the place of honour which is their due is usurped by the unworthy.

"It is said, that, under free institutions of society, men of talents, if not of virtue, will rise,—that a republican country

will at least escape a government contemptible by its folly and weakness? Yes! men of talent will rise; but they may be those who have a talent to wield a mob, rather than to govern a state,—to build up a party, rather than to strengthen the foundations of national greatness; it may be cunning, not wisdom, the power of managing vulgar passions, which men of vulgar minds often possess in the highest degree, that will triumph. In some corrupt states of society, not even this miserable talent will be requisite to obtain promotion. Let a people yield themselves to their passions, and especially to envy, the besetting sin of republics, and they will sometimes advance men of gross and narrow minds, in preference to men of distinguished ability, for the very purpose of humbling their superiors. In a republic, eminence in talent is sometimes a crime, and rude and clamorous ignorance may be raised above it. From these causes it may happen again, as it has happened before, that the rulers of a republic will be more weak and wicked than the spoilt child of royalty. Of what use, then, is the privilege of electing rulers to a depraved people?

"These remarks naturally lead to the consideration of another advantage peculiar to republican institutions,—I mean, the power they confer of removing without violence rulers who abuse their trust. This is indeed a great privilege; but again I say, that its benefits depend on the character of the community. Let bad men rise to power by flattering the passions of a depraved people, and how are they to be displaced, except by the arts of men more subtle than themselves? The influence which their elevation gives is all directed to perpetuate their sway. They wield the power of the state for the great and almost exclusive purpose of strengthening the party to which they owe their greatness. For this end, patronage and office are employed to reward past services, and to attract new adherents from the ranks of their opponents. Venal presses are kept in perpetual action to increase the perversity of public sentiment, and especially to feed the spirit of party. There is no passion in our nature more headstrong, unrelenting, unbending, and unwilling to be convinced, than party spirit, and on this the artful and aspiring chiefly rely for the preservation of their power. Let this be kindled, and a corrupt administration has little to fear. To the thorough partisan no conduct of his leaders gives offence. His conscience is in their keeping.

Self-will, pride, malignity, prompt him to uphold their worst measures. He would rather see the republic perish by their crimes, than owe its safety to the virtues and elevation of their opponents. I need not tell you that a corrupt republic is the very soil for party spirit. Here it grows without culture, and shoots up into deadly luxuriance, even when left to its native vigour. Let its growth be aided by human art, and it overspreads the fairest plants of social life, and darkens a nation with its poisonous branches. With these means of support, bad rulers have nothing to fear.

"Especially if the republic be extensive, as well as corrupt, is the prospect of removing from power those who abuse it almost sure of disappointment. The rulers of such a community, seated as they are in the centre, sending forth their patronage to the remotest extremities, and guiding to one end the exertions of their supporters, have every advantage for perpetuating their power. Their opponents, scattered over a wide extent of country, having different interests, wanting bonds of union, offer a divided and feeble resistance. They complain of the oppression under which the nation groans; but the credulous and malignant spirit of party is instructed to lay to their charge the very evils which they are struggling to avert, and a guilty administration contrives to direct upon their heads the indignation which its own crimes and follies have awakened. Thus we see how little benefit is to be expected in a corrupt republic from the power of removing unfaithful rulers."

1817. JUSTICE TO THE POOR. "For what end are civil society, government, and property instituted? Not to build up a favoured few, but for the *general welfare* of mankind. No valid reason, no justification, can be offered for the present order of things, for the division of the earth into distinct possessions, for the great inequalities of property which exist, but this, that the improvement and happiness of men in general are protected by these establishments. The rich derive their title to their wealth from this consideration, that the general welfare is advanced by the institution of property. Society was not instituted, as they are too apt to think, for them alone; but they belong to society. The true end of the social union demands that they live for the general as well as individual good, and the fact that they derive the highest benefits from civil institutions imposes on them a *peculiar* obligation to promote the public weal.

"Society is instituted for the good of all ranks of men. No single rank is made merely for the rest, but all are to exist for each other. It is a sentiment, abstractly true, though it can never be applied to practice, that a man forfeits his right to property just as far as he fails to contribute, according to his ability, to the common well-being. He breaks, in so doing, the tacit compact which every man is supposed to make who becomes or remains a member of society. According to these principles, there is a moral obligation on the rich to benefit the other ranks of society. This they necessarily do, in a measure, by employing the poor and recompensing them for their labour. Such service is a very important one. But when we consider their ability, and consider, too, the immense benefits which they receive from the labours of the poorer classes, they surely ought not to restrict their aid to this limit. . . . . .

"The present state of the world seems to me to demand of the rich a peculiar regard to the poorer orders of society. The time has come, when the security of civil institutions depends in no small degree on the prevalence of a conviction among the mass of the people, that these institutions are beneficial, that property with all its inequalities is a useful establishment, and that the rich are their benefactors and friends. Human nature is not formed to look patiently on superiors. A spirit of discontent generally lurks in the breasts of those to whom the humble offices of life are assigned. This spirit is at this moment peculiarly excited, and it is to be counteracted only by the diffusion of good principles through the great mass of society, and by a deportment in the rich which will engage the confidence of the poor.

"It has long been the tendency of things to increase the power of the middling and poorer classes of society. We must not apply to the present state of the world the maxims which were suited to darker ages and despotic governments. In such ages, and under such governments, the poor were spurned, and no revolt followed, because their spirit was broken, and they were reduced to a brutal ignorance. But the case is different in this and many other nations. Since the Reformation and the revival of learning, a new light has broken on Protestant countries, a light almost as diffusive as the sunbeams, which enter at once the narrow window of the poor man and the broad one of his rich neighbour. A degree of knowledge and of mental activity unknown before

has been communicated to the poorer classes of society. It is too late, even if it were desirable, to keep them in ignorance. The spirit of the age is too active and free to suffer the chains to be fastened on their minds. They already know many things, and among other lessons they have learned *their own weight* in society. . . . . .

"The consequence of the progress of knowledge and of all improvements, in these later ages, undoubtedly has been to arouse a restless and revolutionary spirit through society. This spirit is not to be condemned, as if it were altogether evil. Whilst it is in part quickened by bad passions, it is in part the natural and proper movement of the mind in pursuit of a better state of things. It is traced up to the fact, that the human mind has outgrown old institutions. It is an impulse which we cannot but hope is to result in a more just and happy social order.

"But still this spirit threatens evil, and it needs to be regulated and checked by the diffusion of sound principles of religion and morality. We must not imagine that this revolutionary spirit has exhausted itself. Its violence has been stayed by late events. But events cannot withstand the principles of human nature, and the powerful causes which are now exciting the activity of the human mind. The press, we must remember, is at work,—the mightiest engine ever set in motion by man. A freer intercourse, a more intimate connexion, a more rapid communication of thoughts and feelings than was ever known before, subsists between men of the same class, and between different classes of society. We must not expect that society, under these influences, is to return to its former state. It cannot rest as much on prejudice as it has done. It must rest more on reflection and on principle. In this country in particular, where the majority govern, where all ranks have an equal agency in the election of rulers, the chief support of social order is to be found, not in an outward power of government, but in the internal conviction and moral and religious sentiments of the community. Never did such strong motives, even of a worldly nature, exist as among ourselves, for the improvement of the poorer classes of society."

1817. ADDRESS BEFORE THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF INDIGENT BOYS. "The strongest argument for education is found in the nobleness of the human faculties, and the poor bring with them into being the same faculties

with the opulent. Nature knows none of our arbitrary distinctions. The child in the humblest walks of life is as richly gifted, as largely endowed, as in the highest. He has within the same inexhaustible mine of power and affection, the same resources of heart and intellect. A flame is kindled in his breast which is never to die. Such a being is not to be viewed as an inferior animal, or as important only because he can perform certain labours for the community. He is valuable when considered as an *individual*, as well as when considered in relation to society. He has a nature which, for its own sake, deserves to developed, and which God gave for the very end that it should be improved.

"Among the poor are not only all the essential qualities of mind and capacities of improvement which belong to all men, but all the varieties of intellect which are found in other ranks of life. It is, I believe, a fact, that a large proportion of that heaven-inspired energy which is ordinarily called genius, and which has done so much to advance the human mind, to open new regions of thought and action, and to give a new impulse to society, has been furnished by the inferior orders of society. There is the same chance, to speak in human language, that the sublime faculties of a Locke and Newton are wrapped up in the child of the poor man as in the titled descendant of nobles. As many great minds have dawned in hovels as in palaces. And the poor have not only their proportion of superior intellect, but they carry within them seeds of the highest and noblest virtues, of capacities of elevated devotion, of disinterestedness, of heroism, of those properties which raise our nature from the dust and mark out its immortal destiny. The possession of such a nature as this by the poor is certainly an unanswerable argument for opening to them, as far possible, all those advantages which call forth the mind and heart, which give elevation of character, and render the whole of life a state of improvement.

"It will probably be replied to these remarks, that it is impossible to give to the poor great advantages, that their condition excludes them from the acquisition of various knowledge, and that Providence has thus forbidden the attempt to bestow upon them an education proportioned to their faculties. But this objection, I think, is founded in a wrong view of the nature and design of education. . . . . The great object of education is, not to store the mind with

knowledge, but to give activity and vigour to its powers, to assist it in thinking and inventing, in comparing, discriminating, and combining. The sum of knowledge which schools, and even universities, communicate is inconsiderable. It bears a small proportion to what we derive from other sources, and from sources which are open to every mind. Our principal volumes are nature, experience, and society. Education is of use chiefly as it helps us to read these volumes, as it gives us the habits of patient attention, of observation, of accurate judgment, and of vigorous thought. . . . . .

"The remarks now made will, I hope, remove the objection to the instruction of the poor, that their condition forbids them to be learned. We do not wish them to be learned, nor is this the great end of education. We wish to train their faculties; and this may be effected for the poor, as well as for other orders of society. It will, however, be the effect of a general education of the poor, to awaken and disclose minds of a high order, formed for learning, research, and contemplation, which, without this aid, would have slumbered in obscurity. This, though not the greatest, is one great advantage of extending the best opportunities in our power to the poorer classes of society. In those classes are scattered those noblest works of God, superior minds, minds which ask nothing but a field for action, which need only to be relieved from the oppression of want, which can mount by their own native energy, which are formed to look on nature with a fresh eye, to investigate new truth, to explore worlds of thought now undiscovered, to awaken by eloquence or poetry a higher life and feeling in the human breast. Great minds are the glory of their race, the instruments employed by Providence in improving mankind, and in kindling and elevating their less favoured brethren; and society has an interest in their development wherever they exist. Justice to such minds is one benefit of a general education of the poor. Powerful as native genius is, it requires some aid. The most vigorous seed will perish without light and moisture, and the instruction of the poor affords to superior minds the necessary aid.

"Should the history of the world be traced, I believe it will be found, as I have said before, that society has derived a considerable proportion of its best materials—I mean superior minds—from the inferior classes of society, wherever these classes have enjoyed the advantages which are their due.

The higher classes of society have a tendency to intellectual imbecility, and need to be replenished from the lower. The looser relations of the poor are more favourable to native vigour, originality, freshness of thought, where real genius is possessed; and from all this it follows, that the intellectual progress of a community, its mental activity, its energy of thought and action, will be promoted by extending to all classes the means of education, by giving everywhere to superior minds the opportunity of emerging and of lending their impulse to society. . . . . .

"That the development of intellect should have a tendency to injure the character of the poor, and to render them bad members of society, seems to be a reflection on the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, who must have constituted human nature with a singular want of skill, if its best faculties cannot safely be unfolded. I am persuaded, too, that this sentiment is at war with the history of the progress of society, which teaches us that there is a close connexion between our intellectual and moral powers, and that knowledge is friendly to virtue. The idea, that a large part of mankind must be kept in a state of brutal ignorance and degradation, and be sacrificed, as far as their higher powers are concerned, to the welfare of society, shocks our best feelings, and those feelings will generally be found in alliance with truth.

"It may be admitted that the education of the poor will give them a desire to better their condition, and that this desire may sometimes be impatient, and may hurry them into crime. But what then? Does not this desire in every class of society often break out into the same excesses? Shall we, therefore, extinguish it? The desire of rising, of improving our condition, is a radical principle of our nature, and one of the chief sources of all social improvements. It is the life of a community, and without it a people would sink into torpidness, sloth, and the most degrading vices. It is a miserable philosophy which would suppress the great springs of action in the human breast, because they sometimes act with a dangerous power.

"That men will labour less because improved in understanding, seems to me to be an equally erroneous notion. The great motives to steady labour lie in a perception of the future consequences of actions, and require a mind of some comprehension, foresight, and calculation, to feel their force; and hence we may expect the steadiest labour from men

whose faculties have been enlarged by education. That this is precisely the fact, history and observation prove. Slaves and savages, who receive no education, are proverbially indolent. The hardest labourers in this country are the husbandmen of New England,—a class of men who have been formed under institutions peculiarly fitted to expand and invigorate the understanding. . . . . .

"Of all our benevolent institutions, those which regard *children* seem to me to hold the first rank. Let charity, indeed, extend itself with a divine activity to all the varieties of human want; let it multiply its forms of action in proportion to the forms of guilt and suffering; let its channels be everywhere widened and deepened; let it erect hospitals, establish dispensaries and provident institutions, watch over almshouses, open receptacles for the reformation of the vicious, and administer comfort to the aged and dying. The aged and dying, however, will soon cease to suffer; their journey is almost finished; and the poor of middle age have formed characters which yield slowly and reluctantly to the influence of any means of improvement. But the child has just begun to live, with a mind pliant and tender, with habits not now rigid and unyielding, with a heart not now tainted and hardened, yet with propensities which, if unchecked, will probably issue in guilt and misery. Abandon him to ignorance, and his youth, if he struggle through its hardships, will train him to crimes for which society has reared the prison and the gallows. . . . . .

"The children of poor families too often inherit the vices and miseries of their parents. Brought up in filth, seeing constantly the worst examples, hearing licentious and profane conversation, abandoned to ignorance and idleness, or, if employed, only employed to beg in the streets, to extort money by falsehoods, to practise a thousand frauds,—from such children what can you expect but lives of sloth and guilt, leading to poverty more abject, if possible, than that to which they were born? This is the most affecting circumstance attending poverty produced by vice. Who can think without an aching heart of the child nursed at the breast of an intemperate mother, subjected to the tyranny and blows of an irritable, intoxicated father, and at length cast out upon the world without one moral or religious principle, or one honest method of acquiring subsistence? Take him under your protection, nurture his tender years, and you may hope to form

him to intelligence and industry and virtue, to a life of cheerful and useful labour, and to the felicities of a better world. Do not—do not let him perish."

1819. OUR DUTIES TO THE POOR. "Formerly, the task of a Christian minister in pleading for the poor was comparatively easy. He had the plain precepts of his Master to support him, and he found in men's breasts instinctive principles and sympathies which responded to these precepts. Of late, however, we have had abundant discussions and speculations on the causes and remedies of poverty, which, however well designed, have tended to shake men's sense of obligation to relieve their poor brethren, and have given pretexts to the selfish and avaricious for shutting their hearts and hands. We have been told that poverty grows by charity, that the prospect of relief begets improvidence, that our giving bribes men to forsake labour, that the way to check beggary is to make it an intolerable condition;—from all which the inference seems natural, that the less we give the better. If this doctrine has not been set forth in so many words, yet I think there has been an approach to it, so that giving to the poor is by some thought a less binding duty than formerly.

"I mean not to deny that much useful truth has been brought before the public by the late discussions on the subject of poverty. I am far from denying that injudicious, indiscriminate charity has swelled the evil which it hoped to alleviate. The Christian precept, to 'give alms,' has sometimes done injury, and chiefly because it has not been limited, as it should be, by another precept, namely, 'He that will not work, neither shall he eat,' that is, be supported by charity. In the Dark Ages, alms-giving was thought an expiation for sin and a passport to heaven. The dying left legacies to convents, to be doled out to daily mendicants without regard to their character or state, so that society lost the labour of many of its strongest and healthiest members. And this evil has not been confined to the Catholics. Protestant sloth has been as injurious as Romish superstition. Too many among us give from a vague sense of duty, but forget the obligation of giving vigilantly, carefully, in the manner most suited to do good. It is easier to give money than time and personal attention. Hence, charity nourishes idleness instead of solacing want, and is a bounty on improvidence. Alms-giving, I freely allow, has caused much evil.

I am also prepared to go farther and say, that, let us give ever so judiciously, we shall occasionally do evil, as well as good. The objections made to the most cautious charity are not wholly without foundation. But this is no reason for ceasing to give. In making these admissions, we are only saying that charity partakes of the imperfection of all human things. The truth is, we seldom or never receive or communicate an unmixed good. Every virtue produces occasional evil.

"It is sometimes objected to alms-giving, as I have intimated, that to prevent poverty is better than to relieve it; and that there is but one way of prevention, which is, to take from men all expectation of relief if they become poor. They will then, it is thought, have motives which can hardly fail to keep them from want. But, unluckily for such reasoning, there is one way only of cutting off this expectation, and God forbid that we should ever resort to it. That only way is, to drive all human feeling from our breasts; for as long as any kindness exists in a community, so long there will be resources open to the poor, let their poverty come how it may, and so long relief will be expected by the improvident. I repeat it, there is but one way of suppressing this hope of relief. We must cast from us all kind feeling. We must turn our hearts to stone. We must bring ourselves to see unmoved the beggar die at our doors. We must make up our minds sternly, inflexibly, to give nothing, let misery assail us with ever so piercing a cry, with ever so haggard, and worn, and famished a look; for nothing but this will prevent the improper dependence which is said to generate poverty. Let any sympathy survive, and it will act and be a hope to the improvident; and can any man seriously think that the evils of this hope are so great, that to avoid them we should turn ourselves into brutes, dry up the fountains of humanity within us, part with all that is tender and generous in our nature? I am free to say that the most injudicious alms-giving is an infinitely less evil to society than this extinction of sympathy. Better multiply beggars, than make ourselves monsters. Kind affection is the life of a community, and the excesses of these affections are to be chosen before a frozen selfishness.

"I would next observe, that I have no belief in the efficacy of this mode of preventing poverty. Let men know that want will find no relief, and I doubt whether it will be

essentially diminished; for human nature has a strange power of shutting its eyes on consequences, especially in youth, and every day's observation shows us multitudes giving themselves up, through the power of the passions, to excesses, pleasures, which, as they see and know, have reduced others in their neighbourhood and families to penury, disease, and even premature death. Present gratification often outweighs an infinite future misery. Men are not to be kept from poverty by being taught that poverty is a helpless state, any more than they are to be kept from crimes by multiplication of capital punishments. The laws are not found to be most efficacious when men are gibbeted for every offence, and facts of a similar nature should caution us against attempts to meliorate society by unmixed rigour.

"Another consideration is too important to be passed over. Let poverty be made a condition in which no relief is to be hoped, which is to be given up to unmixed and unpitied misery, and the temptations to escape it by fraud and violence will be irresistible. No man will be poor who can find his way to his neighbour's coffers; and if, after all honest exertions for self-support, a man should be reduced to want, I am not prepared to judge him severely, should he, to save himself from starving, make a prey of the superfluities of the rich.

"These remarks will not, I hope, be misunderstood. I am not pleading for injudicious alms-giving. It is a great evil. But there is an opposite evil which I think greater, and that is, making use of the bad consequences of charity as arguments for banishing charity from society; and to this point many late speculations on poverty have seemed to me to tend. Christ's precept to give to the poor is not a blemish in his system, but an important and noble part of it. The occasional abuses of charity are not to discourage us in exercising this virtue. We must feel, however, that we but half do this duty when we do it carelessly. We must strive to give so that the least evil and the greatest good may result from our beneficence. . . . . .

"Does any one ask, 'Why shall I pity and help the poor man?' I answer, because he is A MAN; because poverty does not blot out his humanity; because he has your nature, your sensibilities, your wants, your fears; because the winter wind pierces him, and hunger gnaws him, and disease racks and weakens him, as truly as they do you. Place yourself, my friend, in his state; make yourself, by a strong effort of

thought, the inhabitant of his unfurnished and cold abode, and then ask why you should help him. He is a man, though rags cover him, though his unshorn hair may cover his human features,—a member of your family, a child of the same Father, and, what is most important, he not only has your wants and feelings, but shares with you in the highest powers and hopes of human nature. He is a man in the noblest sense, created in God's image, with a mind to think, a conscience to guide, a heart which may grow warm with sentiments as pure and generous as your own. To some this may seem declamation. There are some who seldom think of or value *man as man*. It is man born in a particular rank, clad by the hand of fashion and munificence, moving in a certain sphere, whom they respect. Poverty separates a fellow-being from them, and severs the golden chain of humanity. But this is a gross and vulgar way of thinking, and religion and reason cry out against it. The true glory of man is something deeper and more real than outward condition. A human being, created in God's image, and, even when impoverished by vice, retaining power *essentially the same with angels*, has a mysterious importance, and his good, where it can be promoted, is worthy the care of the proudest of his race. . . . . .

"Next to the great doctrine of immortal life, we may say that the most characteristic element of our religion is that of UNIVERSAL CHARITY. And the doctrine of immortality and the duty of charity are not so separate as many may think; for love of benevolence is the spirit of the eternal world, the temper which is to make us blest beyond the grave, and to give us hereafter the highest enjoyment of the character and works of our Creator. There is another view by which it appears that the Christian doctrine of immortality blends with and sustains charity;—for, according to this doctrine, all men are to live for ever, Christ died for all, all are essentially equal, and the distinctions of their lives are trifles. Thus it is seen that the poor are recommended with an infinite power to the love and aid of their brethren. No man can read the New Testament honestly, and not learn to measure his religion chiefly by his benevolence. If the spirit, and example, and precepts of Jesus Christ have not taught us to love our fellow-creatures, we have no title whatever to the name and the hope of Christians. If we have not learned this lesson, we have learned nothing from our Master. About other things Christians may dispute, but

here there can be no controversy. Charity is a duty placed before us with a sunlike brightness. It comes to us from the lips, the life, the cross, of our Master; and if charity be not in us, then Christ does in no degree live within us, then our profession of his religion is a mockery, then he will say to us in the last day,—'I was hungry and ye gave me no meat, thirsty and ye gave me no drink. I know you not. Depart.'"

1820. THE GLORY OF A STATE. "It is plain, that, to promote the good of our country, we must know what that good is, and as misapprehensions on this subject have done infinite injury, so just views will show us that every man in every class may contribute to it. The honour and happiness of a community consist not so much in the ability and acts of its public men, as in the character, spirit, and condition of its citizens; and whatever or whoever advances these builds up the public welfare.

"If I were to express in a line what constitutes the glory of a state, I should say, *it is the free and full development of Human Nature.* That country is the happiest and noblest, whose institutions and circumstances give the largest range of action to the human powers and affections, and call forth man in all the variety of his faculties and feelings. That is the happiest country, where there is most intelligence and freedom of thought, most affection and love, most imagination and taste, most industry and enterprise, most public spirit, most domestic virtue, most conscience, most piety. Wealth is a good only as it is the production and proof of the vigorous exercise of man's powers, and is a means of bringing out his affections and enlarging his faculties. Man is the only glory of a country, and it is the advancement and unfolding of human nature which is the true interest of a state.

"If this be true, we learn what is the great end of government, the highest good of civil polity. It is *liberty.* I am almost tempted to say that this is the only political blessing, and the only good gift, which law and order can confer on a country. By liberty I do not mean what anciently bore the name, for anciently they had little but the name. I mean the protection of every individual in his rights, and an exemption from all restraints but such as the public good requires. We do not want government to confer on us positive blessings, but simply to secure to us the unobstructed exercise of our powers in working out blessings for ourselves.

The spring of happiness is in man's own breast, not in his government; and the best office of government is to remove obstructions to this inexhaustible energy of the living spirit within us. Liberty, then, is the greatest political blessing, the distinction of a well-governed country. It is a good which cannot be measured. The glory of a country, then, consists in the free character of its institutions, in the security they give to every man's rights. . . . . .

"Every man may promote the glory of his country, for every man, whatever be his sphere, may put forth his powers in useful pursuits, and express and give some extension to right principles and virtuous affections. Let none imagine that they can do no good to the community because they are in private stations. The error has always been to ascribe to public men and public institutions an undue share in the prosperity of a nation. The great powers in the natural world, on which its motion, life, beauty, happiness, depend, are subtile, and everywhere diffused; and so the most effectual springs of a nation's felicity are very different from the cumbrous machinery which works at the seat of government. They are silent as the principle of life in the animal frame. They consist in what we call the *spirit of a people*, in a general respect for rights, which is the sole foundation of civil liberty, in industry, temperance, intelligence, humanity, and piety. These are the elements of a country's life, and he who multiplies and invigorates these is a public benefactor.

"The sentiment, that a country's happiness consists chiefly in its virtue, is, I know, a trite one; but, if I mistake not, its truth is at this moment receiving some new illustrations, and the time seems to be coming, when it will be felt as it has never been felt before. Whoever looks at Europe will see, I think, that a new spirit has gone forth among the nations; that the human mind is unusually shaken; that society demands some new organization, and that new powers, and those of a *moral* nature, must be set at work to sustain its institutions. The old methods of keeping men in order—I mean military force, state religions, and the show and pomp of courts—have lost much of their efficacy, and lost them, not merely through temporary causes, but through the very progress of the human mind. There is an accumulation of intelligence and energy, a consciousness of power, in the mass of the people, never possessed before; and such a state

of society seems to me to demand a stronger influence and wider diffusion of moral and religious principle than formerly. The old arts of restraining a people by superstition and ignorance will no longer avail. A purer religion and a purer morality must take their place, or the prospects of the world are dark indeed. Governments are certainly weakened; they have lost in an unprecedented degree the confidence of the governed; the people are more intelligent and combined; and unless an inward principle of order be substituted for outward restraint, unless governments reform themselves and aid in reforming society, we may find that we have but entered upon the horrors of the revolutionary period. These speculations may be founded on imperfect knowledge of the state of the world; but of one great principle I have no doubt, that we are passing through a process which will give new efficacy to the conviction, that the stability of governments is their justice, and that the prosperity of states rests on moral improvements, on a Pure, Rational Religion, on a Spirit of Humanity, within every nation of Christendom, and toward all mankind."

Chap. V.—MIDDLE-AGE MINISTRY.

ÆT. 34–42. 1814–1822.

We have traced Mr. Channing's course through the irksome years of the Unitarian controversy, and have watched his spiritual growth, as manifested in the sermons preached to his people. And now we would observe him in his social, pastoral, and home relations during this period of his middle-age ministry. But before describing this portion of his life, it may serve yet further to illustrate his character as a controversialist and a theologian, to make a few remarks, which are naturally suggested by the preceding chapters.

The first point to be noticed, and it is an important one, is, that it was his sense of duty to the cause of Free Inquiry, endangered as he thought by a bigoted conservatism, which led Mr. Channing into controversy. The individualizing tendency of Protestantism was then, in New England as elsewhere, swelling like the waters of a freshet, which threaten to sweep away dikes and cultivated acres, as well as icy fetters. But though he saw the risks to which Christendom was exposed, through the rashness produced by rationalism

in the self-willed and superficial, Mr. Channing at once recognised that it was as wrong as it was vain to attempt to dam up the liberal spirit which, on all sides, was seeking a larger form of thought and life. He welcomed the spring-time, and accepted cheerfully the inconveniences of a transition age. The *unity in uniformity*, enforced by the decrees of infallible councils, and by the creeds of Protestant synods, had passed for ever; and in the future was foreshadowed a *unity in variety*, arising spontaneously among the body of believers bound into one by the consciousness of limitation and error, the desire of concert and mutual reverence. He rejoiced to think that the symbol was thus to give place to the reality, that the constrained catholicity of a dominant clergy was to make room for the universal communion of Christians, filled with one spirit of holy love.

Meanwhile, a period was to be passed through of sectarian division, wherein each party, in its wish to be faithful to its own convictions, would be tempted to treat rival denominations with injustice. This era of debate he saw to be inevitable. It was folly to fear it. It was mere waste of time to oppose or to mourn over it. Duty urged him to follow the providential leading, with confidence to seek clearer views, with candour to listen to all who uttered their sincere opinions, never to cover up doubt by make-belief or half-belief, without dogmatism to be decided, and patiently to wait for the time when glimpses should be enlarged to complete vision. As faith ascends into knowledge, it becomes ever more apparent that according to Divine design the multiplicity of minds is a means of harmony, that the most bitterly opposed partisans are each other's necessary complements, and that the Church cannot afford to spare a single sect till the truth which it embodies has attained its rightful place. The principle by which Mr. Channing was governed he has thus distinctly expressed, and the passage throws much light upon his views of his own position and duties:—

"It is due to myself to say, that the controversial character of a part of my writings is to be ascribed, not to the love of disputation, but to the circumstances in which I was called to write. It was my lot to enter on public life at a time when this part of the country was visited by what I esteem one of its sorest scourges; I mean, a revival of the spirit of intolerance and persecution. I saw the commencement of those systematic efforts, which have been since developed,

for fastening on the community a particular creed. Opinions which I thought true and purifying were not only assailed as errors, but branded as crimes. Then began what seems to me one of the gross immoralities of our times, the practice of aspersing the characters of exemplary men, on the ground of differences of opinion as to the most mysterious articles of faith. Then began those assaults on freedom of thought and speech, which, had they succeeded, would have left us only the name of religious liberty. Then it grew perilous to search the Scriptures for ourselves, and to speak freely according to the convictions of our own minds. I saw that penalties, as serious in this country as fine and imprisonment, were, if possible, to be attached to the profession of liberal views of Christianity,—the penalties of general hatred and scorn; and that a degrading uniformity of opinion was to be imposed by the severest persecution which the spirit of the age would allow. At such a period, I dared not be silent. To oppose what I deemed error was to me a secondary consideration. My first duty, as I believed, was, to maintain practically and resolutely the rights of the human mind; to live and to suffer, if to suffer were necessary, for that intellectual and religious liberty which I prize incomparably more than my civil rights. I felt myself called, not merely to plead in general for freedom of thought and speech, but, what was more important and trying, to assert this freedom by action. I should have felt myself disloyal to truth and freedom, had I confined myself to vague commonplaces about our rights, and forborne to bear my testimony expressly and specially to proscribed and persecuted opinions. The times required that a voice of strength and courage should be lifted up, and I rejoice that I was found among those by whom it was uttered and sent far and wide. The timid, sensitive, diffident, and doubting needed this voice; and without it, would have been overborne by the clamour of intolerance. If in any respect I have rendered a service to humanity and religion, which may deserve to be remembered when I shall be taken away, it is in this. I believe, that, had not the spirit of religious tyranny been met, as it was, by unyielding opposition in this region, it would have fastened an iron yoke on the necks of this people. The cause of religious freedom owes its present strength to nothing so much as to the constancy and resolution of its friends in this quarter. Here its chief battle has been fought, and not fought in vain. The spirit of intolerance is not, in-

deed, crushed; but its tones are subdued, and its menaces impotent, compared with what they would have been, had it prospered in its efforts here."*

But though thus ready to defend freedom of conscience against every form of oppression, however plausible, Mr. Channing entertained no personal ill-will towards those whose course he was called upon to resist. He had genuine dignity, indeed, and a high sense of honour, and was capable of feeling deep indignation; but he had been for years too chastened in spirit to indulge anger or to cherish unkindness. And as he was considered by some of his Orthodox adversaries to have been quite too stern in his mode of conducting controversy, it is but right to mention one or two facts, and to give some extracts from his correspondence, which may serve to set forth his character in its true colours.

In relation to his letters to Dr. Worcester, one of his brothers thus writes:—"I was living in his house at this period, and when he had finished the letter, he read it to the Rev. Mr. —— and myself. We both at once made complaints at its mildness, and insisted that it had the tone of a timid man begging for mercy, rather than of a brave one who was supporting a righteous cause. By our importunity he was persuaded to modify it. He expressed the kindest feelings, but, on the other hand, was unwilling to seem lukewarm in what he regarded as a very serious matter. Many parts were altered accordingly; and when the letter was finally sent to the press, its original gentleness was merged in the more emphatic passages which he had inserted in consideration of our urgent requests. Years afterwards, I believe in 1832, I was reading a tract of his, while sitting with him in his study. Its vehemence pained me so much, that I could not but remonstrate against its spirit. He listened patiently, hesitated for a moment, and then, looking up with the sweetest smile, said,—'The sins of earlier days arise

* Preface to Reviews, Discourses, and Miscellanies, 1830.—The statements and arguments presented on the Orthodox side may be found in "A Letter on Religious Liberty, by Moses Stuart, Professor of Sacred Literature in the Theological Seminary, Andover." Boston, 1830. Professor Stuart therein avers that the accusations of Dr. Channing are "NOT TRUE," page 37. This letter was replied to in "Two Letters on Religious Liberty, by Bernard Whitman." Boston, 1830. The reply called out a rejoinder in the Spirit of the Pilgrims, which Mr. Whitman answered in a "Third Letter."

against me. I followed the judgment of friends in printing that. I deeply regret that there is a word there which strikes you as being bitter. Surely I never felt an unkind emotion towards any person for a difference of opinion.' As he spoke, the whole history of the tract flashed upon me. It was the very letter to Dr. Worcester to which I had been instrumental in giving its present form. This was by no means the first or last occasion when he heard his own mildness reproved, and when he was induced, by fear of betraying the cause in which he was engaged, to use a warmth of expression that was really in discord with his own temper.

"In all differences of opinion with others, I never heard him utter a harsh word, and there were always marked expressions of disapproval, whenever he saw acrimony or unfairness manifested, however obnoxious the person might be against whom they were directed. When Dr. Griffin, who was the head of the Orthodox party, and bitterly opposed to Liberalism, was officiating at Park Street Church, a slanderous report was raised against him, as malevolent as it was false. I was walking with my brother one day in the Mall, when Dr. Griffin having passed us, he was led to speak of this base history. He declared how deeply he was shocked to see a smile of triumph on the countenances of the Doctor's opponents,—many of them being of course his own supporters. His language on this occasion was the strongest which I ever heard fall from his lips. As he spoke of the spirit manifested by these men, made mad by theological hostility, he characterised it as exhibiting the basest elements in human nature, and as truly diabolical.

"I will give one more example to illustrate his habitual generosity toward opponents. A clergyman from a distant part of the State preached some sermons in Boston, in 1817, in which he severely criticized, and indeed actually vilified, the character of the Liberal clergy in the most wholesale manner. I, in company with several acquaintances, was present. In the evening the discourse became naturally the topic of conversation among us. Much indignation was expressed. But my brother directed all his remarks to softening the feelings of those who were aggrieved by the abuse of honoured friends. 'I cannot blame this stranger so severely,' said he; 'these harsh judgments never originated from himself; he was led by others into false impressions. How sad is controversy, that it should thus tempt our opponents to

misrepresent men whom they might and should know better!' Thus did he endeavour to find extenuating circumstances whereby to explain, if not excuse, the conduct of his adversaries. These slight recollections are of worth only as proving the essential disposition and uniform behaviour of the man. He was thoroughly magnanimous and just."

The view thus given of Mr. Channing's character, by one who was an eyewitness of his course, will be confirmed by the following extracts from his letters.

1819. "I have to thank you very sincerely for calling my attention again to this subject. My inquiries have ended in a stronger conviction, if possible, of the truth and importance of the views which I have published. . . . . I believe that you have made as good a defence of Trinitarianism, or rather of Christ's supreme divinity, as can be expected, and am assured, that, the abler the advocate, the stronger and more general will be the conviction that the view cannot be supported.

"I wish you every blessing, and great and increasing usefulness in your important and responsible station. That God may deliver us both from selfishness, ambition, and prejudice, and that he may show us our errors, whatever they may be, and give us honesty and boldness to acknowledge and openly renounce them, is my prayer."

1820. "I have read enough of Dr. Carpenter's work to learn its object, and I lament that the state of things among you has laid on him the duty of exposing so much at length the misrepresentations of Bishop Magee. . . . . I am too far from you to judge what is best, and since this work has been thought necessary, I cannot but rejoice that it has been undertaken by a man so imbued with the Christian spirit as Dr. Carpenter. The time has been, when it would have been thought good policy to oppose to the Bishop a controversial bully, able to meet him on his own ground and to fight him with his own weapons, and as little scrupulous about the means of humbling an adversary. But I trust the times of this ignorance are past, and that we have learned the wisdom as well as virtue of defending truth with moderation and benevolence. That party, especially, which makes its appeal to reason, and looks for success to the extension of deliberate and impartial inquiry, has an interest in banishing passion and violence from controversy, and giving the example of forbearance and candour."

1821. "The death of Dr. Worcester affected me not a

little, for you remember that he was one of my opponents in the Unitarian controversy, and certainly not the most forbearing. I trust that I learned from that experience a new lesson of tenderness and charity towards those who differ from me, and who may seem to be injurious. When I see how fast my theological adversaries and myself are passing away, and how soon our motives are to be laid open at a higher tribunal, I cannot but hope, as I look back to the time of our controversy, that I have cherished towards them no unchristian feelings.

"I have understood that Dr. Worcester fell a victim to his zeal in the cause of missions, and for this every Christian will honour his memory."

We have seen Mr. Channing's earnest desire to do justice to the rights of individual minds; but now let it be observed, that, on the other hand, he did not slight the claims of the collective reason of man as declared in tradition. To many free inquirers, indeed, he must have seemed, and did seem timid and tenacious of old prejudices. He was no destructive, and had no taste for criticism and negation; neither was he so insensible to the grandeur of spiritual problems, as hastily to construct an eclectic system out of the ruins of past opinions, or to build a private temple from the unquarried rock which modern investigation had laid bare. Conscience compelled him to reject many dogmas in relation to God, human nature and destiny, which the Puritans had transmitted to their children, and he gratefully received the cheering views which the more childlike piety and warmer charity of the age, under the guidance of clearer science, were inspiring. Though thus liberal, however, he was very far from casting aside all established convictions of the Church as superstitions.

Of the three grand classes into which Christians may be grouped, the TRINITARIANS, the NATURALISTS, and the MEDIATORIALISTS, Mr. Channing undoubtedly belonged at this period to the last. He did not look upon man as utterly corrupt in sin, and see in Christ the incarnate God, descended upon earth to bear the burden of our guilt and woe, and by self-inflicted penalty to provide the means of our justification and pardon. But neither did he regard man as in a normal state, advancing by natural progress, and see in Jesus only a person of religious genius, who, under the impulse of a fine temperament, and the stimulant of enthusiasm in his nation,

had attained to a union with God which was equally accessible to every human being. Undoubtedly he recognised a portion of truth in each of these systems, although dissenting from both. But he agreed rather with those, scattered among all sects, and forming, probably, in all ages, the majority of believers, who consider mankind neither totally depraved, nor yet merely undeveloped, but actually degenerate, through an abuse of free will. And in Jesus Christ he reverently acknowledged a sublime being, who, by his coming upon earth, had brought about a crisis in the condition of humanity, had touched with healing power the vital springs of goodness in our race, and had opened the heavens through which evermore flow in full influxes of spiritual life. With no impatience to invent satisfactory answers to mysteries which he saw to be unsolved, and especially anxious not to divert men's regards from the goodness of God's beloved Son by speculations upon his rank in the scale of being, he yet for himself was inclined to believe in Christ's pre-existence, and his continued mediatorial power over human affairs. In a word, he was then an Arian. And any one who has read the extracts already given from his sermons will have perceived that passages in his published writings, which have often been interpreted as merely eloquent rhetoric, were really the calm suggestion of thoughts, which, though he forced them upon none, he yet inwardly cherished as of profoundest interest.

Hereafter, perhaps, more than at present, it will be recognised as Mr. Channing's distinguishing peculiarity, that he blended so harmoniously in his theology views of Christianity which are usually held as irreconcilable. Then, possibly, the deliberateness with which he kept before his mind, as open questions, doctrines which those around him on all sides dogmatically settled, may be considered a higher title to honour than the decision with which he stepped forward to uphold the right of free thought and speech. However this may prove to be, the fact undeniably was, that while he formed the most free and generous estimate of human nature, he held opinions in regard to the Divine government, spiritual influences, a mediator, and the kingdom of heaven, which by most Liberal Christians would be considered rather mystical than rational. Has it been observed how closely he connected his confidence in the essential dignity of man, his aspirations after perfect union of the human will with the

Divine, his hope for the future greatness of mankind, with the fact of the life of Jesus Christ? In this complex theology of Mr. Channing shall we find a proof that he was a man of imagination and sentiment more than a philosopher, or shall we rather admire the wisdom which, while it made him bold and frank where he was convinced, kept him humbly guarded before the unveiled wonders of the eternal world?

It certainly was not owing to unwillingness to abandon wonted habits of thought, to sluggish indifference, or to any form of selfish fear, that Mr. Channing chose to occupy the middle ground in theology; for nothing characterized him more than the youthful eagerness with which he greeted the advent of every newly discovered truth. He was "not a watcher by the tomb, but a man of resurrection." He lived in the mountain-air of hope. And at this period of his life he was breathing in the freshness with which the whole intellect of Christendom seemed inspired, as it pressed onward across the wide prairie which the science, philosophy, poetry, and revolutionary tendencies of the age had opened. It was with intense delight that he made acquaintance with the master minds of Germany, through the medium, first, of Madame de Staël, and afterward of Coleridge. He recognised in them his leaders. In Kant's doctrine of the Reason he found confirmation of the views which, in early years received from Price, had quickened him to ever deeper reverence of the essential powers of man. To Schelling's sublime intimations of the Divine Life everywhere manifested through nature and humanity, his heart, devoutly conscious of the universal agency of God, gladly responded. But above all did the heroic stoicism of Fichte charm him by its full assertion of the grandeur of the human will. Without adopting the systems of either of these philosophers, and, fortunately perhaps for him, without being fully acquainted with these systems, he yet received from their example the most animating incentives to follow out the paths of speculation into which his own mind had entered. In the extracts given from his sermons, there is nothing more striking than his increasing spirituality, his high ideal of human nature, his lofty enthusiasm, and glowing hope. In thought, act, speech, he was a poet, though his chosen position was the pulpit, and the sermon his chief medium of expression.

But it was to an English writer that he was indebted for

yet higher pleasure, and perhaps as efficient aid. This was Wordsworth, of whom he always spoke with the most respectful affection, as of a benefactor by whom he felt that his heart and mind had been equally enriched. Shortly after the "Excursion" appeared, he obtained a copy of it, which was sent over by a London house to a publisher who knew little of its worth. It had been heralded by the ridicule of the "Edinburgh Review," which then was a dictator to the literary world of America yet more than of Great Britain. But to Mr. Channing it came like a revelation. He kept it constantly by him; and, as he once said, had "never read anything but Shakspeare more." He saw a beauty even in its prosaic passages, admired the rare felicity of its language, and was inclined to consider it the most elaborate and finished production of the age. But it was the spirit of the man, rather than the skill of the author, that attracted him. Wordsworth's mingled reverence and freedom, loyalty and independence, manly simplicity and heroism—his piety, trust, humility, profound conscience, and earnest aspiration—his respectful, tender, appreciative love of man, recognising greatness under lowliest disguises, and spreading sweet sanctions around every charity of social life—his intense love of beauty, all-vivifying imagination, and mystical adoration of the Universe as the shadow of the Infinite Being—his subjective habits of thought, metaphysically refined mode of observation, power of looking beneath all surfaces to the life, and beneath all forms to the spirit—his high idealism, humanity, and hearty naturalness, in a word, combined to form a character with which Mr. Channing's was in full harmony.

The following extract from a letter to Mrs. Cappe, illustrates at once the influence of Wordsworth over his mind, and indicates the direction which his thoughts were taking.

1820. "I occasionally see the 'Monthly Repository,' and among the rational, sensible, and matter-of-fact communications which fill that work, I have met now and then with pieces from a writer who seems to have made the discovery that Unitarianism, and imagination, and poetry are not irreconcilable foes. The author is one of Wordsworth's school. When I tell you that I incline to the heresy of this writer, and that I wish to see among Unitarians a development of imagination and poetical enthusiasm, as well as of the rational and critical power, you will not wonder at my curiosity in

wishing to learn who this writer is. I have before told you how much I think Unitarianism has suffered from union with a heart-withering philosophy. I will now add, that it has suffered also from a too exclusive application of its advocates to biblical criticism and theological controversy, in other words, from a too partial culture of the mind. I fear that we must look to other schools for the thoughts which thrill us, which touch the most inward springs, and disclose to us the depths of our own souls. Pardon me for finding so much fault. It is not owing, I hope, to censoriousness. I only wish that truth may be so presented as to be friendly to our whole nature; that it may devolop, not chill, those powers which have always exercised the mightiest sway among men, and which seem most akin to inspiration."

The mood in which Wordsworth looked upon nature, man, and the course of Divine Providence, was for the most part quite congenial to Mr. Channing. But, from temperament and position, he was inclined to take a far more active part in the stirring scenes of the time than the poet seemed to encourage. To a great extent, indeed, their views of the French Revolution, and of Napoleon's career, were the same. Together they had stood upon the mountain peaks of religious faith, while the tornado of atheism, charged with the red lightnings of military power, and the destructive hail of radicalism, had swept across the civilized world; together they had seen the storm subside beneath the mild airs of humanity, and had looked down over valleys and lowlands serenely smiling in the sunshine of Divine love. But the lesson which Mr. Channing had learned from this tremendous experience, was a conviction of the need and opportunity of peaceful reform. His gaze was bent upon the future, not the past. In full justice practically rendered to the nature of man—in opportunities for culture, refinement, social position, wealth, and free intercourse opened to all classes equally—in a spirit of brotherhood, embodied in honourable and humane relations, he foresaw the means, the only means, of re-establishing reverence, loyalty, courtesy, and contentment. Thus are we brought to consider the position which he held in political and philanthropic movements. And we shall find that the earnest humanity of his youth and early manhood had not wasted itself, but rather gained depth and volume in its onward course.

The extracts already given from his sermons have suffi-

ciently indicated Mr. Channing's feelings in regard to the military despotism of France under the stern sway of Bonaparte.* We are now to witness the unbounded exultation with which he greeted the news of the overthrow of the man whom he then, and through life, regarded as an atrocious tyrant. On the 8th of June, 1814, a number of the citizens of Boston and Massachusetts assembled at the house of the Hon. William Phillips, the Lieutenant-Governor of the State,

"To consult upon the propriety of noticing the event of the entire subversion of the military despotism which had so long desolated the Christian and civilized world, in a manner suited to its character and importance, and to the sentiments which it was calculated to inspire. Deeply impressed with the magnitude and the beneficial and lasting influences of this revolution upon the best and dearest interests of society, they had no hesitation in recommending to their fellow-citizens the observance of a solemn religious festival, in commemoration of the goodness of God in humbling unprincipled ambition, in crushing wicked and unjust power, in delivering the world from cruel and disgraceful bondage, in restoring to mankind the enjoyment of their just rights under the protection of legitimate government, and in giving to nations the cheering prospect of permanent tranquillity. For that purpose a large and respectable committee was chosen to make the necessary arrangements, composed of the following gentlemen:—

Hon. C. Gore,	T. H. Perkins,
George Cabot,	E. H. Mills,
John Warren,	John Lowell,
B. Pickman, Jun.,	Samuel Putnam,
George Bliss,	Wm. Sullivan,
John Phillips,	Rev. Wm. E. Channing,
H. G. Otis,	Joshua Huntington."†

* There are yet stronger passages than those which have been quoted in the earlier pages of this volume. And, except for the purpose of biographical illustration, the editor would not have felt himself at liberty to preserve expressions of opinion which are so plainly coloured by the prejudices of the past. But it is well to keep a record of the state of feeling with which the great crisis of Modern Europe was regarded by the men of that day. Let the future judge of all the actors in those trying scenes.

† Appendix to a Discourse delivered in Boston at the Solemn Festival in Commemoration of the Goodness of God in delivering the Christian World from Military Despotism, June 15th, 1814.

Mr. Channing was elected to deliver the sermon. On the 15th of June, the day appointed, a large assembly, composed of the most intelligent and influential persons in the community, filled the Stone Chapel. Never since the time of the adoption of the Constitution had there been in that city a meeting of a political character animated with a deeper joy; and no speaker could have been better fitted to give voice to the latent enthusiasm of the crowd. On no public occasion of his life was he so carried away by sympathy with the profound and passionate emotions which swelled in the popular mind. He gave full vent to his feelings,—with free and bold strokes painted the past degradation of Europe,—poured out the vial of indignant censure upon the ambitious despot who had made Christendom his prey,—re-awakened the memory of the awful apprehensions with which men had watched his destructive career,—and when the audience were swept along in prospect to the verge of ruin, then he drew aside the dark cloud-curtain, and showed the benignant promises of peace spread out in mercy before the exhausted nations. As he uttered the words, "The oppressor is fallen and the world is free," the pent-up feelings of the assembly burst forth in acclamation. It is said that the preacher paused, and calmly reminded his hearers that they were in the presence of God, to whose providential aid their humble gratitude was due.

This sermon was rather an extemporaneous overflow, than a studied address; but it may be desirable to extract a few sentences. They prove that Mr. Channing drew encouragement from scenes which had turned many a fervent reformer into a timid conservative, and that he looked forward with confiding hope to better times.

"From the events which we this day celebrate, we are especially to learn that most important lesson, to hold fast our confidence in, and never to despair of the cause of human nature, however gloomy and threatening may be the prospects which spread before us. How many of us have yielded to criminal despondency! . . . . But now we are taught, as men, perhaps, never were taught before, to place an unwavering trust in Providence, to hope well for the world, to hold fast our principles, to cling to the cause of justice, truth, humanity, and to frown on guilt and oppression, however dark are the scenes around us, and however dangerous and deserted may seem the path of duty. . . . .

"A most solemn experiment has been making on society. The nations of Europe, which had all in a measure been corrupted by infidel principles, have been called to witness the effect of those principles on the character and happiness of nations and individuals. The experiment is now completed, and Europe and the world are satisfied. Never, I believe, was there a deeper conviction than at the present moment, that Christianity is most friendly to the peace, order, liberty, and prosperity of mankind, and that its subversion would be the ruin of whatever secures, adorns, and blesses social life. Europe, mangled, desolated Europe, now exclaims with one voice against the rule of atheism and infidelity, and flies for shelter and peace to the pure and mild principles of Christianity. Already the marks of an improved state of public sentiment may be discerned. We are at length permitted to anticipate the long lost and long desired blessing of general and permanent peace. A new era seems opening on the world. It is our hope that the storm which has shaken so many thrones will teach wisdom to rulers, will correct the arrogance of power, will awaken the great from selfish and sensual indolence, and give stability to governments by giving elevation of sentiment to those who administer them. It is our hope, that calamities so awful, deliverances so stupendous, will direct the minds of men to an almighty and righteous Providence, and inspire seriousness and gratitude, and a deeper attachment to the religion of Christ, that only refuge in calamity, that only sure pledge of unchanging felicity. Am I told that these anticipations are too ardent? Perhaps I have indulged the hopes of philanthropy, where experienced wisdom would have dictated melancholy predictions. I am not forgetful of the solemn uncertainty of futurity. But amidst all uncertainties which surround us, one truth we know, that God governs, and that his most holy and benevolent purposes will be accomplished."*

The joy of this festival was sobered, however, by the reflection, that, though peace had settled upon Europe, the United States and Great Britain were still at war. New England was at this period utterly prostrated, her commerce paralyzed, her people bowed down with taxation, and to such an extent had dissatisfaction with the measures of the general government spread, that in December, 1814, delegates selected from her most eminent citizens assembled in con-

* Discourse at the Solemn Festival, &c., pp. 11–15.

vention at Hartford, Connecticut, with the view of securing their endangered rights, and consulting upon measures suitable to the exigencies of the time. Doubtless there were some who, in their disgust at the war, were inclined to urge a separation of the New England States from the Union, but it is now well understood that the object of that Convention was to open a vent to the popular excitement, to allay passion, to give a safe direction to the indignation of the community, and thus to avert the threatening danger of secession. Mr. Channing was among those who thought that everything should be sacrificed, except essential principles, for the preservation of the Nation. Then, as through life, he was devotedly attached to the Union, and though, as we have seen, opposed to the war with his whole soul, as utterly unjustifiable and inexpedient, he yet never allowed himself to despair. He would not abandon the hope, that the promise given to the world in this republic should be fulfilled. His views are well shown by a few extracts from a sermon, preached to his people immediately after the news of the Treaty of Ghent arrived, and repeated on the day of thanksgiving for the peace.

"I have said, that the single consideration that war is at an end is enough to fill our hearts with gratitude. But how should this gratitude be heightened, when we consider the state from which peace has rescued our country! The continuance of the war must, I fear, have destroyed us as a people. We had poured out our resources with a profusion which had emptied the treasury of the nation, and destroyed the credit of the government. Increasing taxes, imposed on an impoverished people, would have fomented discontent and insurrection. In this broken state of society, our best institutions would have been shaken to the foundation and subverted. The obligation of contracts would have been violated. General bankruptcy would have spread general distress, and destroyed the moral principles of the community. A spirit of insubordination, inflamed by hopeless suffering, would have annihilated the authority of law. The bonds of society would have been dissolved. These, at least, were the solemn forebodings of our most reflecting men. Peace has saved us from these convulsions. . . . . .

"Peace is snatching us, too, from the brink of civil dissensions. We seemed to be approaching a solemn crisis. To the evils of a foreign might soon have been added the sorer

evils of internal war. Thank God! the union of these States will at least be prolonged. The day which is to witness the dissolution of our political fabric is at least deferred. May we not trust that its great ends will in a measure be accomplished? Peace has placed the present rulers of this nation on a new ground. Without endangering their power, they may now consult the good of the whole country. Every motive incites them to encourage industry, enterprise, the development of resources, in every division of our wide land. Let every aid be given them in the establishment of a generous policy. It is very unimportant in whose hands is the power of the state, if it be but honourably and wisely employed. Most ardently do I hope that the men who have plunged this country into ruin may expiate their error by embracing, at this auspicious moment, a magnanimous course, and that their success may find its reward in the support of all parties into which we are unhappily divided. Prosperity such as our nation never yet experienced is brought within our reach. Nothing now is wanted but an impartial administration of the government, and a spirit of mutual forbearance among our citizens, to fulfil the bright anticipations which patriots of better days cherished for this favoured people.

"May we not hope that the lessons of experience will not be lost, that a better spirit will pervade our communities, that we shall learn the value of a broad scheme of action, embracing at once the interests of all sections of this extended republic? May we not hope that the spirit of enterprise and improvement will now be unchecked, that new cities and towns will everywhere arise on our shores and in the wilderness, that arts and science will be widely diffused, that institutions sacred to humanity and virtue will meliorate the tone of social relations, that civil and religious liberty will be guarded and cherished as our best possession and most honourable distinction? Let us rejoice that we are once more to be bound in amity and profitable intercourse to every nation under heaven. God grant us perpetual peace! God grant us the honour of contributing by our commerce, by the light of our intelligence, by the example of a free, virtuous, and contented people, to the happiness and advancement of the human race!"

Thus liberal and magnanimous were Mr. Channing's political sentiments at the close of the troubled years through which the humanity of Europe and America had been called

to pass. But the sermon whence the above extracts have been made is interesting also as manifesting his views in relation to Peace. The horrible cruelties by which Christendom had been blasted, as by lava-floods and ashes from the open crater of hell, had taught him, in common with thousands in all lands, to look upon war as the most awful and wasteful crime of which nations and men can be guilty. And he takes this occasion to deepen in his people's minds a conviction of the honourableness and blessedness of peace.

"I rejoice with you that the groans of the wounded and dying are no more to be heard on our shores, that the ocean is no longer to be stained with our own or hostile blood, that the skies are not again to grow red with the portentous glare of flaming towns, that we are no more to swell the crowd of widows and orphans, whose hopes have perished on the field of battle. I rejoice with you that the soldier is to return to his home from the depraving influences of a camp, and to earn subsistence by better means than slaughter and plunder. I rejoice with you that the resources of our country are no longer to be exhausted in carrying fire and death to neighbouring provinces, that we are no longer to cast away our own blessings by attempting to destroy the blessings which God bestows on our brethren, no longer to ruin ourselves by seeking the ruin of another civilized and Christian nation. I know that to many war is a matter of course, that it seems to them a trifling affair to shed man's blood, to desolate fruitful regions, to scatter terror, want, and misery over once happy lands. But, thank God! I speak to some not thus hardened by savage customs and the calculations of inhuman policy, and who regard an unjust and unnecessary war as concentrating the guilt of multiplied murders. For one, I do rejoice that this war is to be terminated without the erection of a single monument of triumph upon the soil of this Commonwealth. What compensation could have been found in the most splendid victory for the loss of distinguished citizens, of men made noble by character and intellect, for the anguish of parents, widows, children, mourning the slain, for the wretchedness of bereaved, dispersed, impoverished families? It is not Christianity, certainly, that would teach us to forget the loss of friends in brutal exultation over the slaughter of enemies,—enemies who yet are men of the same nature with ourselves, children of the same Heavenly

Father, commended by the same Redeemer to our good-will. . . . . .

"What a change! We can now look forward to the opening year without the anticipation of battles, in which even success would have covered us with mourning. Instead of watching with solicitude the movements of hostile fleets, we shall see our harbours enlivened with friendly sails. The ocean, instead of bearing freights of death, will waft onward the exchanges of mutually beneficial products. Our homes are filled with happy families, no longer distracted with agonizing fear. Whose prospects has not this joyful event brightened? From whose heart has it not chased most melancholy apprehensions? How had war palsied the arm of industry, closed the shop of the artisan, bound our ships to our wharves, clogged all channels of intercourse, drained off our means! Rich and poor alike have felt its power. From many once prosperous families it has swept away the sure support of life. From many an honest labourer it has snatched the daily bread of his household, and many a generous spirit has it forced to lean on bounty, which once, in self-respect, it would have spurned. Have we not all had reason to fear, that by its continuance the earnings of better times would have been crumbled down, and that those dependent on us would have sunk into want? But now this blighting scourge is stayed. The hope of honourable subsistence is revived in manly hearts. Anxiety is driven from the brows of parents. Cheerfulness spreads light through the comfortless dwellings of the poor. The young need no longer waste their best years in dangerous and disheartening idleness. Fields open on all sides for the expanding powers of enterprise.

"With what joy may we look on our venerable metropolis, —joy heightened by the solicitude with which we have watched the decline of her prosperity! Had the war been but for a few years protracted, its ancient honours must have been humbled; its inhabitants would have been dispersed, its schools shut up, its churches deserted, its institutions of piety and benevolence struck with decay. But now the fetters which have bound our energies are broken. Our silent streets are once more sounding with the roll and hum of business. Our grass-grown wharves once more are to swarm with loaded drays, and to be filled with heaps of merchandise.

Our dismantled ships once again are to spread their wings, and bind us by ties of harmonious intercourse with every region of the earth Once more our beloved metropolis is to become the home of honourable usefulness, the nursery of public spirit, knowledge, charity, and every institution which embellishes and exalts human nature. Wealth is again to flow in upon us through all the circulations of industry, not to feed luxurious indolence, but to give employment to the poor, to quicken ingenuity, to awaken the spirit of beneficence, to encourage science and the elegant arts, to nurture genius, to endow seats of learning, and, above all, to diffuse the knowledge and power of Christianity. My friends, I rejoice with you in these cheering prospects. Enter again on the labours which make the true glory of nations. God send you success!"

Thus earnestly bent was Mr. Channing to discourage the infernal custom of war, and especially to allay "the proud, vaunting, irritable, contentious, aspiring temper, more disposed to honour courage than humanity, more restless the more it is successful, more devoted to party than to public weal, more open to the influence of parasites and intriguers than of wise and impartial men," which he pronounces to be the bane of republics. But while thus longing for the era when the lion and the lamb should be led in a leash by the little child Charity, which he believed Christ had come to introduce, and which he was assured would in the fulness of time knit our long-sundered race into one, he was not then prepared to take the ground of condemning defensive war. Whether it is to be traced to natural temperament, to early training, to historical studies, to the habits of thought of the age, or to principle, it is certain that he had the spirit which, though frail in physical structure, and devoted to his pastoral office, would have prompted him to fight in defence of his country in an extreme emergency. Incapable of personal fear, chivalric in the tone of his character, and predisposed to that love of heroic deeds which, in rude ages of the past, has so often tempted noble beings to forget, amid the excitements of daring devotedness, the destructive outrages of war, and which, in the more human future, shall surely find a worthy field of action in magnificent works of creative industry, he was nowise disposed to abandon the freedom of his native land to the mercies of an invading foe without a struggle. Throughout this period, in private and from the pulpit, he

maintained that it is the duty of the citizen to die, if need be, in protecting the religious and civil institutions of his nation and the inviolability of home. In this very discourse on Peace we find him saying,—

"We feared that the approaching spring would invite hostility to our very doors, that our families would be dispersed, and that the stillness of suspended business would be broken by the tumult of battle. Had this lot befallen us, I trust that we should have done our duty. We should have fought for the city of our fathers, for our altars and our firesides, with the spirit of freemen and of Christians, relying on the justice of the right of self-defence. But how should we bless God, that we have been saved from this sad necessity!"*

Fervent Christian though he was, brave, subdued in will, humane, and confiding in God, it thus appears that at this period of his life Mr. Channing had not attained to see the omnipotence of love in its undimmed brightness. There are very few even now, indeed, who have a vital conviction that the only power which can subdue violence and wrong is active kindness. Even now they are thought visionaries, who are ready to disband armies and militia, change frigates into merchantmen, dismantle forts, and make of prisons colleges for moral and manual culture. And how can universal peace prevail, until the rule of force in every form, and even the negative principle of non-resistance, give place to the living law of co-operation in all industrial, commercial, social relations of communities and states? In unreserved adherence to the cause of peace, Mr. Channing was surpassed by his honoured friend, the Rev. Noah Worcester, who was at this time residing in the neighbourhood of Boston, and editing the Christian Disciple.

This noble-hearted philanthropist had imbibed in fullest measure Christ's spirit of perfect love. Born and bred among the hard-working farmers of New England, self-instructed, and as simply independent as he was unpretending, deliberate, but direct, in his habits of thought; patient to follow out an admitted principle in all its ramified applications, calm from discipline yet more than from natural temper, this wise and gentle man adopted in its length and breadth the rule of overcoming evil with good. He lived in a period when Christen-

* See also "Duties of the Citizen in Times of Trial and Danger," Works, Vol. V., pp. 411–422.

dom was rent by almost universal war, his own nation was shaken by fierce political struggles, and, prompted by irresistible love of truth, he gave utterance to opinions which plunged him at once into the midst of angry sectarian controversies; but still he drew sweetness from every bitter experience, and, candidly as frankly declaring the convictions to which conscientious study brought him, walked ever attended by a guardian angel of tranquillity. Poor, enfeebled by a painful disease, and dwelling in obscure retirement, he was even in extremest age a mindful observer of every humane movement; kind while just to individuals and parties, and opening his heart with hospitable sympathy to every reform which promised to reconcile men to their brethren and to God. To the very end of his long course his presence was majestic in its mildness, and he wore upon his serene features and meek forehead, with its parted silver hair, an aspect of benignity which marked him for the Friend of Peace.*

Noah Worcester may justly be called the father of the Peace movement in this country, by his articles in the Christian Disciple, and his "Solemn Review of the Custom of War." From the first, however, Mr. Channing gave him the support of respectful sympathy and active co-operation. In the spring of 1816, he preached a discourse on War before the Convention of the Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts,† which was immediately printed and widely circulated, deepening in many minds the convictions already taught by the terrible history of the times. This discourse prepared the way for the formation of the Peace Society of Massachusetts, the first meeting of which was held in his study in the parsonage-house of the parish. From this society sprang all the kindred ones in our country, and its influence was felt abroad. Mr. Worcester was its corresponding secretary, and the editor of its periodical; but he relied in all his measures upon the advice of Mr. Channing, who was one of the society's counsellors, and, according to the authority of the Rev. Dr. Pierce, "its life and soul." For years he devoted himself to the work of extending its influence with unwavering zeal, as many of his papers of that period attest; and from among these we select two, as bearing upon im-

* See Dr. Channing's cordial tribute to this philanthropist, Works, Vol. IV., pp. 394–407.

† Works, Vol. III., pp. 29–58.

portant public questions. The first is the following memorial, which was prepared by him.

"To the Honourable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled. The memorial of the members of the Peace Society of Massachusetts respectfully represents,—

"That the society which now solicits the attention of our national rulers was instituted for the single purpose of diffusing pacific and benevolent sentiments through this country, and through the world. Impressed with a deep and sorrowful conviction that the spirit of Christianity, which is a spirit of mercy, peace, and kind affection, is imperfectly understood; afflicted by the accumulated miseries and extensive desolations which war has lately spread over the fairest, most fruitful, and most enlightened regions of the earth; and at the same time encouraged by many decisive proofs of the revival of purer and more benevolent principles among Christian nations; your memorialists have formed this association with the solemn and deliberate purpose of coöperating with the philanthropists of every country in promoting the cause of peace and charity, in stripping war of its false glory, and in uniting different communities in the bonds of amity and mutual good-will. We are sensible, that, from the nature of our object, it is chiefly to be accomplished by a silent and gradual influence on the minds of men, and accordingly we have limited our operations to the circulation of useful treatises, in which the pacific spirit of our religion has been exhibited with clearness, and we hope with success. We believe, however, that the present moment demands a departure from our usual course, and we cherish the hope, that by an application to the government under which we live, important service may be rendered to the cause of humanity, in which we are engaged.

"The present memorial is founded on two occurrences, which we hail as auspicious to the pacification of the world. The first occurrence to which we refer is the well-known and unprecedented union of several of the most illustrious powers of Europe, in declaring before 'the universe their unwavering determination to adopt for the only rule of their conduct, both in the administration of their respective states, and in their political relations with every other govern-

ment, the precepts of Christianity, the precepts of justice, of charity, and of peace.'

"The second occurrence to which we refer is the decided expression of pacific sentiments and anticipations in the conclusion of the late message of the President of the United States, in which his parting wishes for his country are expressed with tenderness and power. In this remarkable passage, worthy the chief magistrate of a Christian community, he expresses his conviction, that the 'destined career of his country will exhibit a government which, whilst it refines its domestic code from every ingredient not congenial with the precepts of an enlightened age, and the sentiments of a virtuous people, will seek by appeals to reason, and by its liberal examples, to infuse into the law which governs the civilized world, a spirit which may diminish the frequency, or circumscribe the calamities of war, and meliorate the social and benevolent relations of peace; a government, in a word, which may bespeak the noblest of all ambitions, that of promoting peace on earth and good will to man.'

"On the occurrences now stated your memorialists respectfully beg leave to found the following suggestions and solicitations.

"First. We respectfully solicit, if it be consistent with the principles of the constitution, that the solemn profession of pacific principles, lately made by several distinguished sovereigns of Europe, may be met by corresponding professions on the part of our own government. Whilst we are sensible that a melancholy discordance has often existed between the language and the conduct of rulers, we still believe that the solemn assertion of great and important principles, by men of distinguished rank and influence, has a beneficial operation on society, by giving to these principles an increased authority over the consciences of those by whom they are professed; by reviving and diffusing a reverence for them in the community; and by thus exalting the standard of *public opinion*, that invisible sovereign, to whose power the most absolute prince is often compelled to bow, and to which the measures of a free government are entirely subjected. When we consider the support which is now derived to war from the perversion of public sentiment, we are desirous that our government should unite with the governments of Europe in a distinct and religious acknowledgment of those principles of peace and charity on which the prosperity of states and

the happiness of families and individuals are alike suspended.

"Secondly. We respectfully solicit that Congress will institute a deliberate inquiry, for the purpose of ascertaining the methods by which this government may exert on human affairs that happy influence which is anticipated by the President of the United States, the methods by which it 'may infuse into the law which governs the civilized world a pacific spirit,' 'may diminish the frequency or circumscribe the calamities of war,' and may express the 'most noble of all ambitions, that of promoting peace on earth and good-will to man.' We are persuaded that a government sincerely disposed to sustain the august and sublime character which is here described, of the pacificator of the world, will not want means of promoting its ends. We trust, that, under the persevering and well directed efforts of such a government, milder principles would be introduced into the conduct of national hostilities; that the reference of national controversies to an impartial umpire would gradually be established as the law of the Christian world; and that national compacts would be formed, for the express purpose of reducing the enormous and ruinous extent of military establishments, and of abolishing that outward splendour which has so long been thrown around war, and which has contributed so largely to corrupt the moral sentiments of mankind.

"When we represent to ourselves a Christian government sustaining this beneficent relation to the world, mediating between contending states, recommending peaceful methods of deciding the jarring claims of nations, labouring to strip war of its pernicious glare, and to diminish the number of those who are interested in its support, diffusing new and generous sentiments in regard to the mutual duties and obligations of different communities, and inculcating by its own example a frank and benevolent policy, and a sincere regard to the interests of the world—when we represent to ourselves such a government, we want language to express our conceptions of the happy and magnificent results of its operations. It would form a new and illustrious era in human affairs, whilst, by the blessings which it would spread, and by the honour and confidence which it would enjoy, it would obtain a moral empire more enviable than the widest dominion ever founded on violence and crime.

"Loving our country with tenderness and zeal, accustomed

to regard her as destined to an exalted rank and to great purposes, and desirous to behold in her institutions and policy increasing claims to our reverence and affection, we are solicitous that she should enter first on the career of glory which has now been described, and that all her connexions with foreign states should be employed to diffuse the spirit of philanthropy, and to diminish the occasions and miseries of war. Of such a country we shall exult to be the children, and we pledge to it an attachment, veneration, and support which can be accorded only to a virtuous community.

"It is our happiness that we live in an age when many noble schemes of benevolence have been accomplished,—when the idea of a great amelioration of human affairs is no longer rejected as a dream of fancy,—when statesmen are beginning to learn that all nations have a common interest,—when philanthropy is extending its views to distant countries, and is executing purposes which would once have been regarded as the offspring of a blind and extravagant zeal. In this age of enlarged views, of generous excitement, of unparalleled activity for the good of mankind, it is hoped that the idea of a nation espousing the cause of peace and humanity will not be dismissed as visionary and impracticable. Enlightened and benevolent statesmen will discern that we do not live in ordinary times, but that a new and powerful impulse has been given to the human mind, which, under judicious influence, may issue in great and permanent improvements of the social state.

"In presenting this memorial, we solemnly declare, in the presence of God, that we have no private or narrow views. On this subject we belong to no sect, no party. As lovers of our country, as friends of mankind, as disciples of Jesus Christ, with the spirit of peace in our breasts, and with a deep impression of the miseries of war, we are only solicitous to prevent the effusion of human blood by human hands, and to recal men to the conviction that they are brethren. We trust that the warmth with which we have spoken will not be construed into a want of deference towards our rulers. On such a subject, coldness would be a crime. Our convictions are deep, and no language but that of zeal and earnestness would do them justice.

"We hope that we are addressing rulers who are sensible to the responsibility imposed by the possession of power, who regard the influence which is granted them on human affairs

as a solemn trust, who consider themselves as belonging to their country and to mankind, and who desire to treasure up for themselves consolations in that hour when human applause will be an unavailing sound, and when no recollection will be so dear as that of having aided with a disinterested zeal the cause of peace and humanity."

The second paper is a letter to Mr. Worcester, in which he refers to the war against the Seminoles,—a war that, undertaken, as it was, by a strong and professedly Christian and civilized nation against a scattered remnant of Indians, because they offered a retreat to slaves who had escaped from our oppression, and with an ulterior desire of robbing them of their lands, was certainly a concentration of all mean cruelties.

"The Seminole business has been disposed of by Congress, and I have no wish that our society should enter the lists with government. But may not the subject be treated usefully in this way? Let us allow, for the sake of the argument, that the majority are right in construing the laws of war. Let us then state distinctly, and without any exaggeration, the acts of General Jackson, which they say are justified by these laws. May we not then bring home to men's minds the question, whether the time has not come for repealing such horrible laws? If war demands such regulations or outrages to accomplish its ends, can war too soon be abolished? We may say, that Congress have authorized all future commanders to exercise the same dreadful discretion in war. If so, is it not time to exert ourselves to prevent the recurrence of this infernal state of things? It seems to me, you may turn to good account the decision in Congress, without combating it. I wish this occasion to be made use of. The recital of the transactions of this 'justifiable war,' and comments upon it, may furnish matter for the number,—and I believe the public have not these facts before them in a connected series."

We have already seen the strong detestation with which Mr. Channing regarded one of the basest outrages of war, —if, indeed, any degree of more or less can be found in the guilt of its inhuman practices,—namely, *privateering*. But so much had he at heart the extinction of this barbarous custom, that it is but just to him, by yet further quotations, to make his sentiments known. In the sermon on the peace, from which extracts have been given, he thus speaks:—

"May we not hope that mercantile transactions will no longer fly the day, and that the lip of perjury will be closed? Let us especially bless God that peace will sweep the legalized plunderer from the ocean, that privateering will no longer violate all the better feelings of our nature, that the ocean will be the pathway of upright and honourable enterprise instead of depraving warfare, and that we shall bear our part in dispensing over the earth the bounties of Providence."

The following letter to Mr. Worcester shows the mode by which he proposed to awaken the national conscience to the enormity of this system of authorized piracy.

"Boston, February 22, 1819.

"—— communicated to me your memorial relating to privateering. We agreed in the belief that no good would result, but that some evil might, from presenting it to our legislature. I will talk to you fully on this point when we meet,—and will only say now, that, such is the relation of this Commonwealth to the general government, that our best friends in the legislature might doubt the expediency of such an application to Congress as you propose, and might seem, by declining to act with us, to favour privateering. May I suggest another mode of reaching our end? May not a memorial to Congress on the subject be circulated through *the whole* country, so that at the next session the voice of the friends of peace and humanity may be heard from every State, entreating the adoption of measures which may hasten the abolition of this abominable custom through the Christian world? May not peace societies be used for spreading this memorial, as well as the meetings of the Friends' religious associations?"

The caution blended with humane enthusiasm, so apparent in this last letter, is yet more clearly manifested in another on a kindred topic,—the abolishing of the savage usage of punishing the rash and hidden crime of private murder by public murder coolly committed, and sanctioned by judicial, executive, and religious proprieties. It is addressed also to Mr. Worcester, who, in consistency with his ruling principle, was seeking the destruction of the gallows.

"We must not alarm men by the appearance of adopting plans for the amelioration of mankind without deliberation.

We must not bring forward too many schemes, *even if judicious, at the same moment.* This is the way to raise a host of prejudices. We must proceed gradually. Your labours for peace will, I hope, be blessed, and a life devoted to this object and to the diffusion of a more candid spirit among Christians will be worthily and nobly spent. The time may come for the discussion which you wish to bring before the public; but just at this moment, when there seems to be a fear that philanthropy is going too far, I am inclined to defer it. If you will trust me to write a piece on the subject of capital punishment, showing the difficulties which attend it, and the great principles by which all punishments should be regulated, I will do it. I have thought a little about it; and I am persuaded that the immediate object should be not so much to *abolish capital punishments*, as to strike at *the root of the evil*, at that corruption of society which renders severe punishments necessary, and to enforce on the community the obligation of introducing modes of punishment most suited to reform offenders. I fear that the cause of humanity might suffer by abolishing capital punishments, unless there should be *a simultaneous introduction* of modes of punishment more efficacious than would be left on our present system."

In addition to the promotion of peace and a reform in penitentiary discipline and punishments, other philanthropic movements also engaged Mr. Channing's sympathy and aid. As early as 1816, he preached a discourse upon Temperance, which his society urgently requested him to print as a tract for general circulation. In the missionary enterprise, too, he was much interested, and brought the demands of this cause impressively before his people. Indeed, so much did he feel the importance of this sublime effort to link the race of man into one whole, of which Christendom should be the heart,—by streams of piety, intelligence, and love sent out to circulate through the body of material intercourse which commerce was forming,—that, according to a declaration once made to a friend, he was on the point of breaking all his social ties and devoting himself to the work. Infirm health, however, and the pressure of the immediate duties in which he was engaged forbade. But through life he cherished a strong conviction of the high claims of missionary labours, while at the same time he was ever becoming more earnest to cleanse the fountain, by making the whole life of

Christendom, national, commercial, domestic, individual, more truly Christian.

This desire of evangelizing mankind was closely connected with another movement, just rising into notice, which we now proceed to mention. The æra of peace then dawning on the world interested Mr. Channing, by the opportunity which it afforded for uniting Christians more closely in common labours of beneficence. He saw everywhere, as he thought, the signs of a revival of a life of holiness and love. In his sermon at the "Solemn Festival" he had said,—

"This reaction in favour of religion and virtue will, we trust, continue and increase. Amidst the sufferings and privations of war, a generous spirit for *the diffusion of the Scriptures* has broken forth; and at this moment that sacred volume, which infidelity hoped to bury in forgetfulness with the mouldering records of ancient superstition, is more widely opened than in any former age to the nations of the earth."

Thus are we brought to consider his connexion with the world-wide movement for the distribution of the Bible. In 1811 he had delivered the first anniversary address before the Bible Society of Massachusetts, and from 1812 to 1820 he filled the most important office in the society, that of Chairman of the Executive Committee. The annual reports prepared by him were ample. They were regularly printed, and became an important auxiliary in promoting the objects of the society. A few extracts from these reports will show the position which this movement occupied in his regards.

1813. "No sincere Christian can need arguments to convince him that he is bound to contribute to the diffusion of Christianity through the world. This is a religion designed for all nations. Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to preach it to every creature under heaven, and shall *we* do nothing in aid of this great design? Is the gospel the appointed instrument of God for restoring the world to purity and peace? Has the Son of God died to impart this invaluable blessing to our race? Have holy men of all ages toiled and suffered to spread it through the earth, and to perpetuate it to unborn generations; and shall *we* do nothing to extend the knowledge and power of the word of eternal life? . . . . .

"In the present convulsed and disordered state of the world, it is most consoling and cheering to see so many Christians, of different countries and different denominations,

forgetting their divisions, and uniting in one great effort for making known the Scriptures to every nation under heaven. Like the rainbow in a dark and stormy sky, this is a promise of a brighter and happier day. It is suited to carry forward our thoughts to that predicted period, when the knowledge of God shall fill the earth, and all nations be joined in love to their common Father and Redeemer, and to one another. We should rejoice that it is the design of Providence to effect this revolution by the instrumentality of Christians, and we should esteem it our privilege and happiness that we may bear a part in this inexpressibly sublime and merciful work of God."

1815. "We are now brought to a subject which has awakened peculiar interest. In our last report we informed you that the sum of £157 2*s.* 9*d.* sterling had been raised, chiefly in this metropolis, and transmitted to the British and Foreign Bible Society for the purpose of repairing the injury done to that society and to the cause of Christian charity by the unworthy conduct of the owners or agents of an American privateer, who had captured and sold, and thus scattered through our country, a number of Bibles shipped from England for charitable distribution in the neighbouring British provinces. A letter from Lord Teignmouth, the President of the British and Foreign Bible Society, addressed to your Corresponding Secretary, and expressing the gratitude of that society, has been received; and we are happy to insert it in this report; not because we consider this transaction as entitled to the commendation which his Lordship has bestowed; not because we have the least desire to obtain the praise of generosity for what we deemed an act of justice, and a faint acknowledgment of respect to that munificent society, which has made the whole Christian world its debtor; but because we delight to record so striking an example of the spirit of Christianity counteracting and triumphing over the spirit of war. We have ever esteemed it one of the happiest effects of Bible Societies, that they tend to unite Christians of all nations, and it is our hope that they will awaken in Christians universally so strong a sense of the near relation which they sustain to each other, and of their obligations to mutual love and kindness, that wars between communities which profess the religion of Christ will be more and more abhorred, as most unnatural, and altogether irreconcilable with the holy and pacific name which they bear.

"The great sentiment, that Christians of all nations are brethren and friends, united by ties which war cannot dissolve, and bound to labour together for the promotion of peace and holiness, must be carried with power to every heart by the perusal of this letter. May the time soon arrive when Christians of every nation will speak on this subject in a language which every government will be forced to hear and obey. . . . . .

"It is also with great pleasure that we are able to state that your society has received, since the last aniversary, a large and valuable accession of members;* and we confidently anticipate, that, among the other fruits of peace and returning prosperity, an increasing patronage will be extended to an institution which proposes to Christians of every name an object which all must acknowledge most worthy of their bounty.

"Another cause of congratulation remains to be mentioned. We refer to the encouraging intelligence from so many parts of this country and of Europe, of the multiplication, activity, and success of institutions for the distribution of the Scriptures. The spirit of Christian charity seems to gather strength from exertion. Never, perhaps, since the first age of Christianity, has a holier zeal existed than at the present moment for the moral and religious improvement of mankind. The British and Foreign Bible Society, that full and living fountain, is still sending forth its streams of truth and consolation; and distant nations, whom once no bond but interest connected, are now uniting in prayers and labours for the communication of the gospel to every creature under heaven.

"At such a period the excitements to Christian exertion are peculiarly strong. A voice seems to reach us from every part of Christendom, calling us to strengthen the hands and to share the honour of our brethren in extending that truth which has been the object of affection and hope to the pious and benevolent of past ages, and which we are assured is appointed to have free course and to be glorified, until it shall fill the earth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

1816. "Never before was so generous an impulse communicated to so many hearts. Never, since the first promulgation of Christianity, has so sublime a spectacle been

"* The whole number of members is 432."

exhibited as that which we now witness of Christians in both hemispheres, separated by language, climate, manners, and oceans, forgetting their distinctions, and conspiring as brethren in the work of illuminating the world. Perhaps human history affords no example of such extensive co-operation for the good of mankind.

"From such institutions, founded by the most illustrious men, patronized by sovereigns, endowed by opulence, and inspired and sanctified by ardent love of God and mankind, are we not authorized to hope a melioration of the moral and religious condition of society? May we not anticipate a more wide and glorious manifestation of the power of Christianity on the hearts of men? May we not especially hope, that Christian nations, being thus united under the peaceful standard of the cross, and labouring and triumphing together in the cause of their common Lord, will drink more largely into his spirit, will exchange their animosities for love, and will shrink with horror from the thought of devoting each other to slaughter and desolation?"

Mr. Channing was interested, not only in extending the circulation of the Bible, but in promoting a rational and consistent interpretation of it. During this and the later portion of his life he gave much time and thought to the elevation of theological learning. This will appear more fully hereafter; but a few hints come here in place, which may indicate his progressive career of thought, and show his ready faithfulness to every call upon his energies. Immediately after the death of Buckminster, who for his age was undoubtedly the best read and most accomplished theological scholar in the country, and who had been chosen the first lecturer on the Dexter Foundation in the Divinity School at Cambridge, Mr. Channing was selected to fill that office. This was in 1812. He accepted the appointment, bought a portion of the very valuable library which his lamented friend had with great care and expense collected, sent abroad for various books from Germany and England, and began to make preparations for these new and difficult duties. He was pleased with the prospect of usefulness thus opened, though diffident of his fitness for the work. But he soon found that his health was entirely inadequate for the efforts to which he saw that a conscientious professor was summoned, who in the unsettled state of theological science undertook to be a guide, and in 1813 he resigned his trust. He retained a close relation, however, to

the Divinity School, and became thenceforward one of its most active guardians, as is conclusively shown in many letters and manuscripts. The careful meditation which he habitually turned upon an institution so important in every view to the well-being of the churches will appear by a few extracts from his private papers.*

"It is essential to a good institution that one spirit should pervade it, and that all its parts should harmonize. The balance between the intellect and the affections, or rather their joint action, should be most sedulously provided for. The Christian character, the spirit of Christ, as the *ultimate in religion*, should be presented in all its brightness. Whatever draws the mind from this is injurious. Zeal, self-denial, devotion to God and Humanity is the *essential*. The general course of instruction should tend to produce these. Speculations awakening scepticism, or undue exercise of intellect, should be avoided. Great *principles*, on which religious sentiment and practice rest, should be strongly, frequently offered to attention. The mind needs progress. Difficulty is its stimulus. But should it not be active chiefly in analyzing the true, in working on what is substantial, in building on a foundation, in developing the causes and connexions of what is known to be real? To determine what proportion of time should be given to points which have mocked the efforts of the wisest men in all ages, and which are yet agitated and under debate, requires great judgment."

"Young men who are merely students, self-indulgent, stimulated by the desire of literary distinction, accustomed to regard the profession as a road to eminence, and feeding selfish thoughts, are not the fit materials for a good ministry. Manners, knowledge of the world, taste, wide range of thought, must be reconciled with and pervaded by spirituality, self-renunciation, independence, strong action of practical piety, warm and patient interest in the neglected, outcast, poor, sinful."

"The *end* of the ministry should be set before them with great plainness, the *vastness of the change* which it is intended to work in society and individuals. They should be affected deeply with the condition of society, with the conviction that its state is exceedingly remote from that which Christianity is designed to bring in. Their minds should be quickened

* See also the Tract "On Increasing the Means of Theological Education," &c., 1816, Works, Vol. V., pp. 363–371.

by the faith that a great change is *practicable*. Tameness grows from the thought of going on for ever in the steps of the past. The attention of theological students should be turned more on the state of the world, less on abstract subjects; a lively interest in its progress should be aroused. They should feel as men set apart to produce a reform in the moral condition of mankind. The miseries of the *mass of men*, their toils, ignorance, sufferings, temptations, should touch them. Study should be seen to be a means only. How can a theological institution be made to give to its students the advantage, which students in law and medicine have, of seeing the actual application of principles, the profession illustrated in practice? Study conducted under the influence of sympathy with men would be vastly more efficient."

"The present course of training is too technical. It does not communicate a living spirit. A tone of feeling should pervade the institution, so that new students may at once imbibe it. Fervour should be a primary object. The intellect would gain force and largeness from such spiritual excitement. The first lesson to the students should be, that, in order to *communicate*, they must *receive* and be *filled with* the spirit of Christianity. Living Christianity should be the end. It is true that this spirit cannot be poured into them. They must be excited to seek it for themselves. But this must be presented as their most indispensable acquisition. The understanding of religion is exceedingly important; but moral and religious truth is best understood by the moral and religious culture of the soul. The true spirit of study is needed, an earnest desire to look into the deep things of religion from accordance of heart with its sublime realities."

"Fixed meditation must be encouraged, — a deep pervading sense of the presence and perfection of God,—a wakeful spirit of prayer,—a strong conviction of the reality of the future life,—a devotion to the cause of Christ, identification of all their plans, purposes, and hopes with it, and a sense of the infinite importance of Christianity,—a reverence for the human soul, its greatness, worth, perils, prospects,—a vivid perception of the high spiritual purpose of our religion,—a distinct conception of the celestial virtue which it is designed to cherish,—a love deep and disinterested for elevation of soul and the zeal which personal experience of the power of religion gives,—courage, hardihood, and a martyr's patience,—a correspondence to the most earnest spirit of the

age;—these habits of mind and heart will form men of the sacred character which we need, and fit them to be sources of spiritual life to society."

"Can indifference be preserved in a teacher? Is it not in human nature to state our own opinions with greater clearness than those of others? A teacher should affect no secrecy; it is best that his views should be fully understood. The pupil left alone is not more likely to discover truth than when guided. It is not the statement of his own opinions which renders a teacher dangerous, but an unwillingness on his part to allow students impartially to examine them. He should state fairly the arguments in favour of his own views, but he should exert no authority or influence to prevent his pupils from weighing them with perfect freedom. He should direct them to the sources of inquiry, and present them with the means of forming a right judgment, rather than attempt to mould their opinions. Let him make known the opposing views, and refer them to authors who defend them. And while urging his own convictions, let him caution students against receiving them because they are his. We do not wish a theological instructor to form young men after the pattern of his system. The promotion of Christian truth is the end. No teacher is infallible. He should never pretend to be so."

"Our institution is distinguished by this. It does not aim to teach the peculiarities of any sect, but to encourage serious, free, honest, well-directed inquiry. This is our end, —to inspire the students with a resolute, impartial temper in the pursuit of truth. Our fundamental principle is, that men may preach with equal faithfulness who differ on disputed points; that character—the living spirit—is the great thing. We do not wish to form a sect. In theological institutions there is danger that monotony of mind will be communicated, that all will learn to think alike, that there will be want of liberality, impartiality. Let a habit of fair investigation be encouraged, let all minds be taught to examine questions deliberately, to pause before coming to a decision. Our pledge against the abuse of liberty is to be found in a devout, humble, reverential spirit."

But it was not alone by his desire to give a pure, large, and practical tone to theological studies, that Mr. Channing was brought into active coöperation with the educational movements of the day. In 1813, he had been chosen a

member of the Corporation of Harvard University, the duties of which office he continued to discharge for thirteen years. During this period he took an efficient part in all plans for the improvement of the course of instruction and discipline in the College. Voluminous notes remain to prove with what comprehensive and minute attention he made himself acquainted with the condition, wants, dangers, opportunities of the students, and with what discriminating sympathy he lent his aid to every proposed reform. One or two extracts from these papers may be of interest, as showing his general views.

"Cannot religious and moral means of influence be made to enter more largely into the college system, and give it character? Religion should be professedly and conspicuously a main end of education. Piety should be held forth as an essential element of high character in every young man. Literary emulation cannot supply sufficient motive. We corrupt the young, and weaken their best principles, by exclusive use of so low a principle. Knowledge should always be presented as valuable only when inspired with and controlled by high principle. The mind should be turned to God as the fountain of intelligence, and all growth in wisdom should be seen to be an approach toward him, and a preparation for the fulfilment of his designs of good. Religion must be exhibited as the glory of our nature. An ingenuous, magnanimous, heroic form of piety must be inculcated, such as is fitted to win the generous hearts of youth. Religion still has a monkish, gloomy, formal, superstitious air. It is made a master, not a friend, in the eyes of the young. It is presented to them in the aspect of debasing terror, not of elevating and enlarging hope. They should be made to feel that it is the source of all lofty, honourable, manly sentiment. Its connexion should be shown with harmonious and balanced character, with noble aspiration, self-devotedness, grand endeavour, courage, independence. There should be a religious teacher, who can present broad and generous views of religion in accordance with our whole nature, who can converse freely with the young men, visit them, attract them to him, and meet the deep wants which spring up in some minds at this season of life. . . . .

"Religious character, profound moral feelings, a strong spirit of Christian piety and love, are all-important qualifications in the governors and instructors of college, so that

they may be pervaded by an earnest conviction of the supreme importance of cultivating religion and virtue in their pupils, and may constantly show that religion is not a mechanical thing with them,—not a means of discipline, but a grand and living reality. Without this, intellect will be too exclusively the object, and the great end of intellectual power and wealth will not be sufficiently brought into view. Virtue should be seen by the students to be the paramount object. No amount of talent or acquisition should be allowed to be a substitute for want of morality. Character should be regarded as the primary interest. There should be a kind but inflexible demand for purity and goodness. A student should be made to feel that every moral taint is disgraceful, base, abhorrent."

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION. "In forming a system of education for the University, whilst the highest respect should be paid to experience, important aid may be derived from the general principles of education. One of these principles, which deserves peculiarly to be called fundamental, we propose to consider, and to show some of its applications.

"The principle referred to is this,—that in education the great object is not so much to communicate knowledge, as to train the mind, to exercise its various faculties, to give it the free and vigorous use of its powers, to inspire it with a love of truth, and to form it to patient, quick, and keen investigation. This doctrine seems universally admitted, and, according to this, the principal aim of a good teacher is not to fix in the memory knowledge which others have discovered, but to make the student as active as possible in discovering it himself, or in proving and establishing it, and in following it into its results. The more the student advances without aid, the better; he must be helped to dispense with help; and learn to go alone and draw from his own resources.

"This method of teaching will, in the end, communicate a far greater amount of knowledge than others, in which the mind is more passive; because the student learns in proportion to the interest which he takes in a subject, and a vastly stronger interest is generated by active inquiry than by a passive reception of others' ideas. Activity of mind on a subject gives a true and enduring property in what we learn about it, and the memory grasps firmly what the higher faculties have laboured to acquire.

"The present mode of teaching is chiefly by *recitation*, or

by making the student give the ideas of the text-book; and although this is less fitted than any other mode to call forth mental action, it still confirms the principle we are illustrating; for the chief use of recitation is to excite the student to solitary labour, and he gains in this way incomparably more than from the communications of his instructors. The assurance that strict scrutiny will be made into his acquaintance with the prescribed portion of the text-book stimulates him to study it; and if he have tolerable capacity, he generally possesses himself so completely of his author's ideas, as to need little or no explication from the teacher.

"The chief use of the instructor is to make the student his own instructor, and the fruits of his unaided application in his closet are incomparably more valuable than all the assistance or knowledge which he gets from the lips of a master.

"Recitation, however, though to a certain extent useful, is not, as we have said, the mode of teaching most fitted to call forth the mind, and the advancement of the University depends on nothing so much as on introducing or extending methods more adapted to this end.

"It should be a leading aim of the teacher to raise out of his branch topics for inquiry or discussion,—subjects on which the student's power of analysis, comparison, discrimination, generalization, or invention, may be employed. It should not satisfy him, that the ideas of the text-book have been received; their truth should be inquired into; objections to them should be stated or invited; the habit of weighing proofs should be cultivated; and, in general, the student's mind should be made to look as much as possible on the subject of study.

"Some brief examples may illustrate the modes of teaching which are thought most important.—In *mathematics*, the student should be assisted and encouraged to furnish his own demonstrations of propositions, and, among different methods of demonstration, he should give reasons for preferring one to another. The discovery of a new series of proofs should be rewarded with particular distinction. The uses and applications of this branch of knowledge, its history, &c., may furnish topics suited to increase the interest in it. In *experimental philosophy*, the students should be invited to suggest or invent experiments by which any natural law may be established. In studying nature generally, nature should be

as much as possible the text-book, and the student led to read it for himself. Questions should be continually raised as to the causes of the common changes and appearances of nature. To make the mind active on natural phenomena, to accustom it to reduce all which it sees to general laws, to give it an interest in discovering the great ends and connexions of this glorious creation,—these should be the aims of the teacher. In teaching *astronomy*, the student should be more conversant with the heavens. Many students learn from books the situations, distances, and other relations of the planets, without being able to distinguish one planet from another. They hardly know one constellation, and, what is still worse, the vastness, splendour, and sublime movements of the universe are obscured, if not virtually hidden from the mind, through the habit of studying it almost exclusively in an apparatus which is infinitely mean and disproportioned, and has no power of exciting the soul.

"*Logic* teaches the application of the faculties to the discovery of truth. It should be taught practically. The students should be made to find or invent examples of every species of evidence and sophism, to analyze processes of reasoning, to point out false reasoning, and show how the mind was betrayed into it, to point out the different modes of investigation belonging to different subjects, and to inquiré into the history of the processes by which the most important discoveries have been made. *Intellectual philosophy* is a still closer case. The subject here being a man's own mind, and the highest evidence being consciousness, the student should be turned to his own breast, and taught to consult this as his chief text-book. In the *classics*, endless topics offer to lead the student to investigations of the principles of language and criticism, and to the exercise of taste; and, what is equally important, he may be led into an intimacy with the spirit and institutions of antiquity, with the influences under which men then wrote and acted, and by which character was determined. In *history*, the chief aim should be to teach how history should be read, to point out the sources of historical knowledge, and the marks of historical truth and falsehood, to accustom the mind to weigh historical evidence, to teach the application of history to the sciences of human nature and *politics*, and to exercise the moral sense on characters and actions. Once more, in *rhetoric*, the student should select from authors examples of every kind of

figure and composition, &c. &c.—Perhaps these illustrations are too extended, and yet they are only imperfect hints of the methods which may be used in every branch to awaken and call forth mind.

"It may be said that this is a kind of teaching for which the mass of the students are not ripe, and this is not without foundation. There are many of whom nothing more can be expected than a knowledge of the text-book, and let these be thoroughly and patiently drilled. But there are some fitted for the higher kind of instruction here recommended, and perhaps a considerable number to whom it may be applied in one or a few branches. A leading aim with the instructors should be, to make this instruction an object of desire, interest, and competition, and such it would naturally become. It would form the broadest of all distinctions among the students, and, when understood in the community, would be referred to in preparing youth for college.

"This system of course requires *classification according to capacity;* and without such classification, it is conceived that no important change can be effected in the University. As long as the present system is maintained, of giving the same amount of study to all the students, and of adapting it to the average of talents, so long the standard of requisitions and attainments will be low, or it will rise slowly, and we shall be surpassed by wiser institutions. The constant aim of the friends of the University should be to make it worthy of that name, to perfect the system of education, to obtain justly the reputation of training youth more generously than any other establishment in the country; and for this end, instruction must be given adapted to the highest minds. One effect of this will be to raise the average of capacity. We shall attract those who are fitted to receive a higher and more extensive education than can be gained elsewhere, and a standard of intellectual effort and acquisitions will be formed in the College, to which the great body of students will labour to attain. A single section, educated on new and better principles, would exert an influence on the whole mass.

"Great good is to be anticipated from such a method of instruction, if we consider the influence it would have on the teachers. The character of the teachers determines that of an institution. They must not only be men of talent, but must have that talent awakened, called forth, made manifest.

They must bring a strong interest to their work, and of course their work must be of a nature suited to excite interest. Now the employment of hearing a class recite, for the purpose of ascertaining the acquaintance of the students with a text-book, is certainly a dull one. It is a schoolmaster's employment, which is among the most irksome. To go the same dull round with a succession of classes, to hear the same thoughts repeated year after year from a most familiar book, this certainly should not form the exclusive or principal occupation of a man of talent. We cannot wonder that torpor should creep into such an employment; and if the teacher be torpid, whence is the scholar to gather life and energy? We have seen that the great end of the teacher is to awaken the mind of the student to vigorous exertion. His own, then, must act with vigour. A wearisome, mechanical listening to a recitation is not the way to kindle curiosity, to inspire a thirst for truth, to give a keen interest in the objects of study. The proposed mode of instruction, in which the student's powers of investigation and judgment will be tasked to the utmost, in which discussion will mingle with recitation, in which the expression of doubts and difficulties will be encouraged, and in which the teacher will be called to act on suggestions, examples, proofs, objections from the pupil would furnish to a man of talent a field not unworthy of his power, would keep his mind alive, would cause it to be seen, felt, and respected by the students, and would give it a new and quickening agency on theirs. This influence on the teachers, and an increase of animation and spirit in the whole institution, may also be expected from the new and multiplied text-books of the highest character, in every department of literature, which would successively be introduced in consequence of a higher kind of instruction, of the system of classification, and of the option which would be given to young men of talent who shall have finished the prescribed studies.

"As another motive for the mode of teaching here recommended, it may be observed, that it involves one of the most important motives to intellectual effort. It will give to the student the *pleasure* of *successful* application of the intellect, the pleasure of attaining truth by his own activity,—a motive more steady and enduring, and more friendly to intellectual excellence, than emulation.

"In these remarks we have not intended to speak dis-

paragingly of recitation. In the beginning of college life they ought to be frequent, and cannot be too searching, and there will always be students of an advanced standing who can learn only from a text-book. But there are many students capable of a higher mode of teaching, and to these the recitations necessary for the former are waste of time and a heavy burden. The principles here laid down admit of extensive application. They may aid us in judging of the utility of public lectures, and of the best means of profiting by them. They may show the importance of frequent compositions on the subjects taught at college, and of cultivating more than we do a ready command of thought and expression."*

The sympathy thus for ever radiating to the interests of society at large did not exhaust Mr. Channing's love, which shone only brighter and warmer, the nearer the sphere of its action to its central source. He was still a practical philanthropist. Physical debility had gradually warned him, it is true, to confine his personal activity within narrower limits than he had marked out in his earlier ministry, and the whole tendency of events had been to teach him, that his more peculiar and appropriate function was to be a discoverer and announcer of spiritual principles. But proof enough remains, that the benevolence which we have noticed in his spring-time had become the confirmed and unconscious habit of his summer. Indeed, where disinterestedness survives the frosts by which the bleak airs of a world, made selfish through isolation and competition, nip the buds of kindness in so many a young enthusiast, it cannot but bear full fruits in manhood. He became constantly more guarded in his charities, and there is no need to lift the veil which, with true delicacy of feeling, he wore, like a brother of the Misericordia, as he went about on his errands of mercy. But as a fact tells more of a man's temper than any number of general assertions, we feel at liberty to give, in passing, one illustration of his modes of action. Thus writes a recipient of his bounty.

"I ought to see the good hand of God continually stretched out, but some such special providences strike my mind with peculiar power. Were I to tell you my situation, your conviction would brighten, that the hearts of all men are in the hand of the Lord. For a number of days previous to receiv-

* These remarks were probably written after the author's return from Europe; but as they sum up the results of his observation and experience at this period, it is thought better to insert them here.

ing your letter, our barrel of meal and cruse were reduced to nothing, and I had called on a number for help, but could not obtain it. I borrowed a horse, and set out with a determination to procure some necessaries for my family, even if by increasing my debts. On looking into my desk, I found only three cents, which I took with me. In passing through the town, I stopped at the post-office to put in a letter, when the postmaster informed me that there was a letter there for me. I thought within myself, 'How shall I pay for it with three cents?' when, lo! a letter is handed me post-paid. 'Generous friend!' said I. I opened it, and was at first surprised by the bill. But after reflection, I said to my companion, 'See what the Lord can do!' Though the money gave us joy, when thinking of the unknown benefactor, whom God had enabled and disposed thus to contribute to unworthy strangers, yet the matter of the letter, distilled from the heart of the writer, gave us much higher joy. When paying my debts, which I was thus enabled to do, and procuring some necessaries, we could not refrain from mentioning this kind providence. I hope there was nothing wrong in this, as we read that what a certain woman did for Christ was to be told as a memorial of her."

To every form of public charity Mr. Channing lent his ready counsel and encouragement; but it was chiefly within his own congregation that he was earnest to secure efficient union for purposes of mutual culture and co-operative usefulness. With this view, he, in 1817, addressed the following letter to the Committee of the Society in Federal-street.

"GENTLEMEN:—It has pleased a kind Providence to smile on the religious society with which we are connected. The present ought to be gratefully acknowledged by us as a period of prosperity, and it seems to me a peculiarly proper one for accomplishing some valuable objects, by which both we and our children may be improved.

"I have for some time thought that a vestry-hall, or small building belonging to the Society, and placed as near the church as may be, would be a great accommodation and benefit. The uses of it are as follows:—

"1. It would be a convenient place for *catechizing* and instructing the children of the Society,—a service for which the church furnishes very poor accommodations, especially in winter.

"2. It would give us a place for a *singing-school*, which

is very much needed. Though our singing is very much improved, we all of us feel that it might be rendered a more interesting part of public worship. If we had a vestry attached to the church, I think that several persons might meet in it to receive instruction, who would not attend a public school. Besides, there might be weekly or monthly meetings of those of the Society who are acquainted with singing, for purposes of improvement and gratification.

"3. It is known to the Committee, I presume, that a *charity school* has been supported by contributions from our Society and the New South Church, an admirable institution, and conducted in part by young ladies of our church. I am very desirous of giving perpetuity to this truly Christian establishment, and I conceive that this will be effected, if we provide a building in which the school may be kept.

"4. There is also a *Sunday-school*, just commenced, for which a vestry would be highly desirable.

"5. If this plan is adopted, a place will be provided for *meetings of the church*, or of other parts of the Society, for which the common place of worship is too large. The young ladies of the Society have been accustomed to meet for the purpose of being instructed by their pastor. I should wish, if a suitable place were provided, to meet the young men also for the same purpose.

"6. I have a strong impression that a *collection of the most approved books* on moral and religious subjects would be a great and lasting benefit to our Society. Such books, it is well known, have an important influence on the character, especially of the young, and yet they are far from being common among us. Perhaps the extent of the deficiency would surprise you. There are some families of our number, in which individuals may be found with a strong taste for reading, but who cannot afford to purchase any but the most necessary books. In the families of the opulent, too, there are often but few books suited to illustrate the Scriptures, and to furnish religious instruction, and these few are often far from being the best. This deficiency is not to be supplied by circulating libraries, for they contain hardly anything but works of an amusing nature. Even where a disposition exists to purchase useful publications on moral and religious subjects, the wish is sometimes frustrated, either by mistakes as to the merits of books, or by the inability of obtaining the best in this country. Some of the most valuable

works must be sent for to Europe, because the demand is not sufficient to justify booksellers in importing or reprinting them. These considerations persuade me that we cannot easily render greater service to the Society than by laying the foundation of a library to which all classes shall have access. I believe that reading on religious subjects will be very much increased by it; that the attention of the young, which is now too often wasted on unprofitable books, will be drawn to the best authors; that a spirit of inquiry will be excited; that the Scriptures will be much better understood; that the minds of many will be enlarged; that Sunday will be spent with greater pleasure and profit; and that the instructions of the pulpit, aided by books which the preacher will recommend, will be more efficacious.

"These are important benefits, but these are not all. I would recommend, as a part of the plan, that the minister should be the librarian. The consequence of this would be, that his intercourse with all classes and ages of the Society will be increased, and his knowledge of the books which they are reading will furnish useful topics of conversation and advice. This effect, a closer union between the minister and people, seems to me very valuable. I believe, too, that a valuable collection of books, to which all the members of the Society may repair, as to a common fountain of instruction, will increase their interest in the Society and be a bond of union to each other. May I add, that to the present, and especially to future ministers, this collection will be of great use. Our salaries do not permit us to furnish ourselves, but very imperfectly, with books; and the liberty of using freely such a library as I propose will enable us to unfold many subjects more fully than at present to our hearers.

"Your friend and pastor."

In this project he had the cordial support of his wise and warm-hearted friend, the Hon. Judge Davis, who for so many years was the deacon of his Society and his invaluable counsellor, and the Society liberally contributed to fulfil the plan. The building was finished and opened in the autumn of 1818, on which occasion he made an address, from which a few sentences may be selected.

"It is pleasant to see a work of our hands completed, and especially a work which is the fruit and expression of friendly feelings, and which is a testimony of attachment to a good cause. Such is this building, founded in brotherly kindness

and a reverence for Christianity. It was reared by united efforts, and we have now met to set it apart by an act of devotion to purposes which our hearts approve.

" This building has already done good by the exercise which it has given to your liberality and to many pure sentiments. It is now doing good; for it is bringing us together as brethren, as members of the same Christian community. Yet more is it, we trust, to do good; for we have reared it for the advancement of Christianity, a religion which meets all our wants, sorrows, guilt, and fear,—which opens its arms to infancy, and directs the ardent mind of youth to its Creator, which furnishes to our riper years motives to uprightness, which goes with us to the grave, and strengthens the sight to discern a brighter world beyond.

" One leading object of this building was, to provide for the religious instruction of children. I need not observe to you, that in our public services our children hear much which they cannot understand, and that they need more simple and direct instruction. If strength shall be given me, I shall engage in this work, I hope, with more earnestness than I have been able to do, though not without diffidence. The task is not as easy a one as many suppose. It is easier to convey knowledge to minds as ripe as our own, than to adapt ourselves to an age of which we preserve only indistinct recollections. There is, indeed, no labour in teaching children to repeat words; but to proportion our communications to their capacities, to bring the invisible God near to them, to excite them to thought, to touch their hearts,—these are objects which have not sufficiently been proposed in education, and we must advance towards them by a path of our own discovery. In this part of my duty, I hope that some of you will have the leisure and disposition to assist. I could wish that we might consider the religious education of the children of the Society a common end, to be talked of when we meet, and to be advanced by each other's observations and experiments. I dare not pledge myself for great exertion, but, if health permit, I should delight in making the trial, how far parochial may aid domestic instruction, in saving children from temptations, imbuing them with Christian principle, and, while they are yet tender and unfettered by habit, confirming their choice of a pious and virtuous life.

" It is also my hope to meet here the ladies of the Society

whom I have been accustomed to assemble for the study of the Scriptures; and nothing would gratify me more than to meet occasionally the young men for free conversation, or more regular instruction, on the subject of religion."

The meetings of ladies which are here referred to had been held by Mr. Channing for many years. One who was at this period his parishioner, and thenceforward to the end of his life an intimate and valued friend, Mrs. George Lee,* thus records her recollections of them.

"These meetings were usually held at the house of Mrs. Codman. They were intended for religious instruction and for awakening a just comprehension of religious duty. Mr. Channing opened the services by reading portions of the New Testament, which he commented upon in his lucid manner, throwing light upon obscure passages, and rousing his hearers' minds to their highest capacity of reflection. His observations were eminently fitted to inspire a devotional feeling, and shed abroad a spirit of prayer. The subjects selected were those which the whole tenor of his life and preaching inculcated,—unreserved love of our Heavenly Father, uncompromising obedience to his will, the surrender of the whole soul to his service, the unspeakable benefits received through the mission of his Son, the wisdom as well as beauty of holiness. It was by his fervent and exalted manner, that he prepared his auditors for the closing prayer; and when he arose,—for he addressed us seated,—and said with his solemn and impressive voice, 'Let us pray,' I am sure there was not a wandering heart amongst us.

"The meeting might be called one for social worship. a gathering round a domestic altar. The effect could not but be salutary. A few hours were redeemed from the cares and anxieties, the frivolities and conventional forms of life, and the mind called home and directed to its highest destination. The number of worshippers varied; but I should think there was usually fifty or more present. The meeting was designed for the females of his own Society, though others often requested the privilege of attending. I am happy to recal those pleasant days, and cannot be grateful enough that to the last I enjoyed the conversation of our

* Author of "Three Experiments of Living," "The Huguenots in France and America," &c.

beloved friend, and felt the influence of his life. Can I ever forget his calm, impressive tone?"

Thus it appears that Mr. Channing was still an active pastor. But it was chiefly through his sermons that he exerted influence. His power in the pulpit had from the first been constantly increasing, and his full congregation was now often crowded by strangers, who gathered from various motives to hear one who was everywhere recognised as the most eloquent and effective preacher in Boston. His discourses occasioned by the great political crisis through which the country had been called to pass, from 1812 onwards,—the bold, original, and discriminating address on war in 1816,—his able publications in the Unitarian controversy, and especially his Baltimore sermon, delivered in 1819, of which several editions were at once printed, and which was circulated through the length and breadth of the land,—and, finally, the masterly Dudleian Lecture in 1821, in which so succinctly and glowingly he presented the evidences of Revealed Religion, had gradually established his position in the very first rank of the thinkers and scholars of the country; and at this time he was experiencing all the incentives and temptations of celebrity. That he was painfully conscious of the ensnaring power of the ambition which a position of such eminence naturally engenders appears from the care with which in his journals he guards himself against its charms and strives to maintain the purest singleness of purpose. His private papers of this whole period are most affecting from their moral beauty; but the reader turns his eye away from secrets which a mortal scarcely whispers to his own heart, and a feeling comes over him of the awful sanctity of that temple of the soul whereinto God's guardian angels only have befitting innocence to enter. It is enough to say, that conscience sat ever vigilant at the portal of his heart, like a father confessor listening to hear the faintest breathings of remorse, to prescribe the needed penance, to give the blessed sign and word of absolution.

Yet from the piles of these documents, in which the writer's inmost experience is laid bare, as if he stood transparent in the very light of the all-penetrating eye, it seems but right to select a few of the less personal expressions of feeling and thought; for there is no other way of showing the essential character of the man. The most striking intellectual peculiarity of these papers is their minute exhaustive

analysis,—their spirit is devoutness. The writer takes up some disposition of which he is conscious, some branch of duty, some relation in life, some grand principle, some reality, and, holding it tenaciously before him, not only for a day or week, but, as dates clearly prove, for months and years, slowly elaborates a consistent and complete view. It is very interesting to compare the hints scattered in these loose sheets with the compact, finished form in which many of the thoughts finally appeared in the author's published works. One gains thereby some insight of the mode, whereby in the moral as in the natural world gems are formed, and precious metals deposited in the rocks. The profound conscientiousness, patience, earnest solemnity, concentrated strength, unity of this good man, thus become apparent; it is seen how weighty to his own mind was the meaning of his words, how sedulously he simplified the statement of his opinions, how through much struggle he attained to calm, even, equable utterance, how carefully he reserved what was most fresh, brilliant, novel, until assured of its substantial truth,—from what depth of experience he drew. From beginning to end, they mark the process by which an earth-born creature is through willing faith transfigured into an image, faint though it be, of divine disinterestedness. In the fragments which we select, suggestions as to the ministerial profession, the special calls of the times, his relations to his people, and his own peculiar duties, are so intermingled, that it would be useless to attempt to cast them anew into any formal mould. Evidently, to his own mind, his outward life and his inward thoughts were one.

"I should desire that knowledge which will conduce most to the salvation of my people. This sentiment is most favourable to enlarged views, and free and vigorous action of mind. A general loftiness of sentiment, independence on men, consciousness of good intentions, self-oblivion in great objects, clear views of futurity, thoughts of the blessed companionship with saints and angels, trust in God, as the friend of truth and virtue,—these are the states of mind in which I should live."

"Let me be very definite in the ends which I propose, when I converse, write, or preach, and let me keep them in view, and press forward to them. Let me appeal to God for the truth and importance of every sentiment, and for my own sincere conviction, and my desire to impress it. Let

me write with prayer, as on my knees, sensible of my dependence on the Divine Spirit for every good exercise, every right aim, every disinterested affection. Let me be satisfied with plain, serious, important truth, expressed perspicuously."

"Let me purpose, before I begin to write, some definite, serious impression which I wish to make, and pray for direction and sincerity. Let me lead a whole life of religion, humility, faith, devotion; for unless there be this general frame of character, no particular acts will be religious in spirit. The heart is always active, and builds up unawares the discourse of the speaker, turns his thoughts, fashions his expression. Let me in writing and reviewing hold intercourse with God, refer every word to his approbation, and consider whether I bear his message."

"Let me cultivate love, be continually setting before my mind views which will lead to disinterestedness, be continually engaged in some definite benevolent object. Let me labour through the week to keep alive a devotional sentiment, which may thus show itself unforced, and communicate itself to others on the Sabbath."

"Is my preaching attended with encouraging results? Do my people come to hear me to be pleased, or to be made better? Are they not rather attached to the man, than to the cause? Let me be more plain, urgent, importunate, tender. I am more and more sensible to the importance of an earnest, unaffected manner. I should lead my hearers home to their own hearts and lives, and preach searching sermons. I am not plain and forcible enough. I appeal too much to the ingenuous feelings. Men need also solemn, stern warnings. Religion must be presented to them as the end of life, the grand reality. Let me begin to write early enough in the week, so that I may throw my whole soul into the close of my sermons. My work should be all in all. I should visit my people more freely, become a member of their families, know them, be known by them, win their confidence. The sight of every parishioner, and indeed of every human being, should be accompanied with the thought of the grandeur of a human soul, of the beauty, excellence, happiness to which every soul may attain, and the degradation and misery into which it may fall."

"A minister should feel that he is dispensing the truths of a religion introduced by a long line of prophets, sealed by

he blood of Jesus Christ, designed to conduct men to all glory and excellence, to introduce a stupendous change in human affairs, to fill earth with the happiness of heaven. The idea of this grand change should be ever present to him. Nothing low should content him. To inspire elevated, disinterested piety should be his aim. He should *fill* his mind with the thought that man is destined to become the glorious image of God. He should live in a region of hope, he is to be distinguished by grandeur of aim, he should rise above human opinion and every influence which now bows down the faculties with solicitude, despondency, agitation, fear. Zeal to advance the great felicity to which Christ came to raise all men should animate him for ever. He should never think of rest, till this sublime end is accomplished. His whole intercourse should tend to exalt and animate men's conceptions and desires. All his influence should terminate in this *central* point,—that Christ came to call us to a true regeneration, to a celestial virtue; that much, very much, is to be sought, is to be gained. A diffusive philanthropy should be his habitual temper. He should view his people as a part of mankind specially intrusted to him, whom he is to arouse to co-operation in the great common work of promoting holiness and happiness throughout the earth. He must be warm, bold, efficient. The ends before him are infinite."

"Good preaching never enraptures an audience by beauties of style, elocution, or gesture. An easy, unbalanced, unlaboured style should be the common mode of expression. This will give relief and prominence to more important parts, and ensure variety. Composition should resemble nature. Dazzling objects soon fatigue the eye. Simple truth, in plain, perspicuous words, should form the body of the discourse, and all appeals of peculiarly solemnizing, melting, invigorating character should be introduced in the way of transition. By simple truth, staleness and tameness are not meant, for there should always be richness of thought. A sermon should never be a barren sand-level of commonplaces, but a fresh, fertile field, verdant and well watered. In style, as in music, there should be a key, which should change with the topic. Let clearness, dignity, unstrained vigour, elevation without turgidness, purity without primness, pathos without whining, characterize my style. Let me study to be filled with the spirit of the truth I am to

utter, and I shall speak as I ought. A slow, distinct, and rather low enunciation should form the ground of delivery. It is better to require exertion on the part of the hearer, than to stun him with clamour."

"That is the best preaching, which leads the audience to lose sight of the speaker in the sublimity of his themes, when the words and tones are forgotten, and the minds of all are awakened to the contemplation of grand realities. I wish to bring the kingdom of heaven near to men, to persuade them to lead devoted, pure, loving lives. How shall I thus persuade them? Not by violence, irritation, self-exaltation, enthusiasm, excess, — not by prejudicing my hearers against me as a fanatic, and exciting their opposition, —but by manifesting a calm, kind, humble, sincere, dispassionate state of heart, with clear views and direct purposes. Let me preach the whole truth plainly, earnestly, tenderly, but with self-possession. We should labour to undeceive men, who are deluded by self-love and by fashion, satisfied by a hollow outside, decency of manners, ensnared by subtle temptations, and make them feel to the quick the need of a radical change, of integrity, purity, heavenly-mindedness. To do this, we must have the power to search the heart. We must be at once full of feeling, argumentative, comprehensive, particular. I ought to make every sermon practical by applying it to my own state in a continuous process of self-examination. *Permanent impression* is the test of good preaching. Hence individuality, united with large principles, is an essential requisite in a good sermon. Every hearer should feel that he is immediately interested in the truths which are taught, that then and there they apply directly to him."

"That which is often called *pulpit eloquence* is a mode of address calculated chiefly to warm the imagination and agitate the passions. But in preaching, the true end is not so much to produce some sudden effect, as to make impressions which will abide through life, to plant seeds which shall grow and ripen for ever. An impulse communicated to a popular assembly is short-lived. No *change of character* is produced by it. A preacher who habitually adopts this so-called eloquent manner may be a boast to his people and a wonder to strangers, but his real influence will be constantly lessening. He will be heard, admired, criticized, as an actor is, for the excitement he causes. And as he has not the

advantage of a political declaimer, who can find ready stimulants for his audience in the national and local topic of the day, he will be forced to seek his charm in brilliant ornament and striking delivery, and will finally fall into verboseness, affectation, puerility, mysticism, extravagance. On the other hand, a preacher who wishes to interest his people for life must attract and fasten their regards upon the sacred subjects which he brings before them, and not upon his manner. He must awaken in them a love of truth, of religious instruction, of spiritual improvement, of holiness. Then will their attention be unwearied and ever deepening. A minister who is listened to, at the very time when he has conspicuous defects in style and elocution, has a much fairer prospect of usefulness than many a brilliant orator, whom a congregation first hear with rapture, and then grow cold to. Attention, deep attention, is what is wanted in an audience; and the mode to excite it and keep it alive is to present great truths which fill their minds, and motives which inwardly prompt them to vigorous and constant action. A minister must himself, then, be engaged, alive, absorbed in great interests, profoundly convinced of the infinite importance of receiving Divine truth, and manifesting it in his whole life."

"I must urge that repentance which consists in realizing the entire obligation of the law of right, in feeling bound to render perfect obedience, in regarding all sin as inexcusable, in longing for a total deliverance from evil. Men must be made to abhor their sins, to be prostrated before the long-suffering benignity of God, to be humbled, melted, filled with shame at the thought of disobeying such an infinitely wise as well as merciful Being. It is important to set forth the law of God in all its sanctity, largeness, strictness, beauty, glory. It must be shown that the only satisfaction, peace, joy, is in being conformed by Divine love to the image of God. This must be urged until men see and feel that all selfishness is a miserable, hopeless exile, till they love spiritual life as it is in God and angels, as the highest good, to be joyfully chosen above all things."

"When I propose a subject for a discourse, the question should be, How can I bring my mind into the state most favourable to clear understanding, deep impression, strong representation of it? But I should not labour while I write, nor work myself up into a fever inconsistent with calm, humble dependence upon the Divine Spirit, and thoughtful,

affectionate regard for those whom I am to address. There should be nothing strained or excessive, while seeking to place a subject in a light which will bring out new connexions, and array it in attractive beauty. My whole mode of life should be a preparation for treating interesting themes in a fresh and animating way. In choosing a topic, I should first view it in its connexions, relations, position, as compared with other truths. I should then let it expand fully in my mind into all its branches and applications. From among these I should select the views most suited to the special end I have before me. Next, I should consider carefully the best method of arrangement; and in treating every head, my mind should be active to unfold the general thoughts involved in it in their relations to the main subject of the discourse. Every passage should be tested by its tendency to advance the end proposed. During the whole composition, I should be elevated by the greatness of truth, an ardent love of excellence, an active desire for the purity and salvation of man, a glowing piety, a conscious communion with God."

"In the regular course of the ministry, we have most to fear from mechanical sluggishness. Monotonous tameness is the sand-bar on which so many are stranded. The safety is in keeping the heart ever alive. The preacher must draw from his own full experience; he must never write as if writing was his business. The wish to be correct and elegant should never enter his thoughts. He has to penetrate men with great convictions. The Greeks wrote well, because the whole world of thought lay fresh and untouched before them. This should teach us not to form ourselves on models, not to use materials furnished by others, but to be enterprising in the exercise of our own minds, and in exploring the great sources of truth,—nature, man, revelation. There is a free, bold, vigorous tone of thought, the easy action of a generous spirit, which is most desirable for every one to attain. All timidity of character, excessive accuracy, anxious observance of rules, desire to finish minute parts, love of glitter and polish, fondness of conceits, is fatal to this freedom. It is the natural movement of a sincere, ardent, independent mind. The preacher should never give his hearers leisure to admire; he should never permit them to doze. He should write with the ardour of strong conviction, trust himself to the flow of thoughts, and be unconstrained and unreserved."

"True eloquence springs from living perception of the truth, and from intimate communion with the hearts of men. We must not lean on opinion, must not fear the judgment of hearers. Dependence upon an audience is a charmed circle, which represses all generous thought. Love of truth sets the writer free. The vigorous character of composition depends on the decision with which the mind grasps a truth. Eloquence is to be attained by the full culture, the general enriching, of the heart and mind. An enlarged spirit, which has reached grand convictions, will utter itself with a commanding style. There is never true eloquence, except when great principles and sentiments have entered into the substance of the soul, and become incorporated with the whole being. The way to be eloquent is to be possessed with truth. Good writing, good speaking, is that which grows directly from the heart, when expression becomes necessary from the fulness of the soul, when religion is a living principle within us, and the discourse is the spontaneous putting forth of this germinating seed. What is wanted is *genuine* feeling, inward *life*."

"One truth is the seed of other truths. It is sown in us to bear fruit, not to lie torpid. The power of mind, by which truth becomes prolific, is freedom. Our great duty is to encourage vigorous action of mind. The greater number of free and vigorous minds brought to bear upon a subject, the more truth is promoted. The wisest gain but glimpses. Nothing is seen precisely as it is, in all its extent, by any one mind. Truth even, held without inquiry, fosters a temper of passive acquiescence, and makes the spirit effeminate. How many illuminations of celestial origin come to all in sincere hours! Are these inspirations to be subjected to the authority of any tribunal? All expression of *will* by bodies and individuals, that others should think as they do, is tyranny. Numbers have no more right than a single person to enforce doctrine. They are each and all fallible, and are bound to special caution, lest they should exert an influence over each other unfriendly to impartiality. A community so bound to an opinion as to abandon a man, and to be unjust to his character who questions it, is a persecutor, as much as if it used legal penalties. A community should cherish liberality as it does industry, for truth is the food of the soul."

"We should multiply our connexions with other minds, in order that we may receive and communicate more largely.

The liberal mind distinguishes the essential from the accidental, the spirit from the form, rises to general truths and detaches them from particulars, discerns unchangeable goodness amidst all its transient manifestations, separates between the end of human nature and the means of its development, between the temporary arrangement of Providence and its everlasting objects, and judges character, nations, events, opinions, measures, according to these broad views. This is the noblest exercise of thought. Narrow minds take things in mass, confound the local with the universal, the accidental with the essential, and spend their strength in contending for what is secondary, while they alienate themselves from their brethren, with whom they fundamentally agree, on the ground of circumstantial differences. There is a generous way of looking at all subjects,—totally opposed to the technical, the professional, the sectional, the sectarian,—a magnanimous style of thought and feeling, by which we cast aside the party connexions which warp and straiten us, the bribes and lures of applause and public sentiment, and view all things in their relations to mankind at large, and the movement of God's grand designs."

"My object should be, to contribute to that great work which God is promoting in the world. Every faithful effort has its influence. Let me never despair. Local, temporary objects should be comparatively unimportant. An expanded interest in humanity should govern me. I am connected with the Church Universal, with all future ages; and let no devotion to a party lead me for an instant to overlook its defects, or to forget the high claims of truth and right. The religion which is to open heaven in the human heart is as far away from heated bigotry, as from the lowness of a worldly temper. To breathe warmth into the cold, generous piety into the abject and servile, honourable views of God and man into the dejected, timid, and superstitious, should be my end. Let me live to exhibit the paternal character of God, the quickening influence of his spirit, his willingness to raise us to perfection, the glorious capacities and destination of man, the filial nature of religion, the beauty of benevolence, of self-denial and suffering in a generous cause, the union formed by a spirit of humanity between God and the soul, the joy of high moral sentiment, the possibility of attaining to sublime greatness of character and habitual largeness of sentiment and action. Men are to be regenerated, not so

much by a sense of the blessedness of goodness in the abstract, as by coming to understand that disinterestedness, that union with God and his whole spiritual family, in which goodness consists. The glory and nobleness of a soul self-surrendered to God, joined to him in purposes of beneficence, swallowed up in a pure, overflowing love, must be made manifest."

"It is essential in a minister, that his mind should be habitually under religious influences, so that his whole character and life shall diffuse an animating spiritual power. All should feel that his soul is in communion with God, that he lives under the guidance of His *will*, and by His spiritual influences. He should unite with devotional fervour an harmonious, full development of human nature. His end is to flash upon the dormant minds of men a consciousness of the Divine life, to touch the spring of spiritual affection. He should enable them to see how religion works within his own soul, he should make his own mind visible, and show religious truth, not abstractly, but warm and living, clothed with the light and glow of his own conscious experience. Let the perfection of the Christian life, its high, holy, humane spirit, its communion with God, its elevation, disinterestedness, hope, joy, be my habitual state, so that in all my thoughts, actions, studies, I may be a guide to my people."

"Unity of impression should be an object to a minister. He should not undo one day the work of another. All his instructions should have a common bearing, and this implies enlarged views of religion. He must not waste the zeal of men on points of secondary importance. His efforts should be systematic, not desultory, and be governed, not by sudden impressions, but by extensive plans. His whole life and influence should have one tendency. Nothing demands such lucidness, breadth, depth, completeness, harmony of exposition, as the religious life. Foundations must be planted firmly. Seeds of great, enduring, ever-growing principles must be sown. People are injured and made dull and disproportioned by laying excessive stress upon every point. Preaching should call into action the whole spiritual being of hearers. It should not address one faculty only, but manifest religion to the reason, conscience, imagination, heart. A minister should strive to unfold harmoniously the souls of his people, just as he sees Providence unfold the body in a plant or animal. His whole inward life should be brought into activity. His preaching and intercourse with men should be

the result of a joint and vigorous co-operation of all his spiritual powers, quickened by a Divine influence. To excite to *universal growth* should be his end."

"In proportion to the difficulty of the times should be my desire to exhibit solemn and ennobling views. The long religious torpor which has rested on the world has prepared men for an opposite excess. Religious sensibility is an essential element in man, and, however smothered for a time, it must and will break forth again with power. Is it not the error of those who oppose the prevalent systems of Orthodoxy, that they do not substitute interesting views for those which they would remove? They insist that Christ came to restore human nature, that moral good is his end. But do they present this end in its dignity and grandeur? Must we not strongly conceive and represent the glorious change which he came to bring in men and nations? A *divine life*, a *heavenly life*, this is the end for which he came. In exhibiting religion as this *universal regeneration of all human interests*, the present degradation of society must be exposed. Here is the need of earnest remonstrance. Great explicitness, fearlessness, is demanded. Jesus Christ must be taken as the standard and rule; the highest, purest principles of his religion must be plainly proposed as the guide to individual and social practice. The world waits for a new exhibition of Christianity in all its sublime encouragements, its solemn warnings, its glorious assurances. With what entire devotedness should I consecrate myself to this great end!"

"Let it be my object to conceive and express the gospel *worthily*, in life and word to exhibit the religion of Christ in its purity, its sublimity, its divine beauty. Let it be my desire to raise men's thoughts to the *great end* of the being and mission of Christ, to show the exalted, perfected, heavenly state of man which he came to introduce, to exhibit the glorious relations into which he desires to bring us. Let it be my aim to raise to this lofty height the moral sensibility, the ambition, the aspirations, the generosity of men, to animate them to see brightly and vividly this grand destiny which opens before them, to carry their thoughts forward to the future greatness of virtuous humanity, to shed the light of heaven on their nature and present state. The end to be set before them is a thirst for nearness to God, love of him, bright views of him, sympathy with him, desire of his friendship, disinterested self-surrender to his designs, heavenly

goodness, heavenly joy, conformity to the spirit of his beloved Son,—a perfect oneness, in a word, with the Heavenly Father. May not this exhibition of Christianity, as an all-ennobling system of Divine influences, be the *one great end* to which my life and labours may tend?"

"I have often been inclined to think that my own science, that of ethics and theology, comprehended all others. Something specious, certainly, might be said to show that it is the only true medical science, and that they who operate most successfully on the mind are best entitled to the name of physicians."

"I know not who is now filling my place in my pulpit. How should I rejoice to learn that some one was making deeper impressions there than I have ever made! I am far from looking back with much satisfaction on my labours. I can say with the old Roman, 'Of honour I have had enough;' but how cheerfully would I give up all the pleasures of distinction for the joy of witnessing more of that piety among my people, which gives praise, not to the poor instrument, but to '*Him* of whom are all things!'"

"Let us not linger at the threshold of Christianity; conduct us into its inmost depths of life. Help us to break through the obstacles, the doubts, despondency, lethargy, weakness, which hinder us. Open in us an unquenchable aspiration for truth and virtue. Give us a spirit of rational, filial, strong, unreserved, triumphant, glad obedience. Give us perfect confidence in Thee, whose laws are the dictates of fatherly wisdom and love, and who dost delight in the purity and glory of thy children. Dispose us to see thy goodness everywhere, not only when descending upon us, but when diffused abroad, so that we may discern the love which pervades the universe and quickens all spirits.

"Make us sensible of our inward wants, indigence, destitution, weakness. Lay open to us our corrupt motives. Expose to us our hidden vices in all their deformity. Teach us to look steadily into ourselves, till we shall see with something of thine own abhorrence every evil affection. Lead us away from false resources to a sure dependence on thy perfect will, and may this reign supreme within us. Help us to look through the disguises of self-love, to judge ourselves truly, to anticipate the revelations of the last day; and let not this knowledge of our deficiencies and deformities fill us with dejection, but rather endear to us thy mercy, and lead us to

thy grace, while rousing us to vigilance and to firm and faithful conflict with every irregular desire.

"Dispose us to a sincere sympathy with all men, not only to see extraordinary excellence with joy, but to take pleasure in the humblest improvements of our fellow-creatures, in the beginning of everlasting life within them. Incline us to respect the feelings of others, so that we may never wound, nor tempt, nor depress a human being. May we understand the sublime heights of benevolence to which we are called by the gospel, and aim at perfection in all social relations. Assist us to express with power and unaffected simplicity the beauty of virtue, so that we may attract all around us to the heavenly life. Inspire us with an active, diffusive beneficence, and may we have the witnesses of our goodwill in the improved virtues and happiness of our friends, associates, and all within the sphere of our influence. Affect our hearts with the loveliness, beauty, and joy of that mild, condescending, affectionate spirit which our Master breathed, and may we imbibe it till our lives overflow with usefulness and bounty. Assist us in enlarging our benevolence, in diffusing our affections, so that we may embrace in kind regards all beings capable of happiness; and give us wisdom to design and vigour to execute noble and extensive schemes of public and private good. May we learn to lose ourselves in disinterested services from generous ardour, and to delight in imitating thee, and in promoting the great ends of thy providence and the blessedness of creation.

"We pray for the *fulness of thy spirit.* We beseech thee to animate with new life our languid affections. Give us the fervour of devotion, the glow of philanthropy. Awaken us to a holy zeal, a joy in thy service, a promptness to do and to suffer whatever thou dost appoint. May the labours of life become acts of religion and offerings to thee, by the conscientiousness, purity of motive, and devotedness to thy will of perfect good, from which they are performed. May our sense of thy presence be ever more clear, our conceptions of thy character more bright, our gratitude more tender, our love of exalted virtue more generous, our goodwill more overflowing. May a Divine life be ever growing within us."

This series of autobiographical papers cannot be more satisfactorily closed than by the following extracts from a discourse, in which he thus sums up the results of his ministerial experience.

May 26, 1822. "In reviewing the past, I cannot reproach myself with much indolence. The spirit of the times has compelled me to think anxiously and laboriously on the subject of religion. Holding sentiments which are often decried as perilous, I have felt myself bound to examine them with care. In this respect a conscientious minister's lot is more difficult than formerly. There have been times when one generation received implicitly the faith of the preceding. The ministry then imposed a light task on the intellect. But times are changed, nor can we for a moment complain that heavier work is now exacted; for a chain on the mind is the worst slavery, and the searching for ourselves, and on our own responsibility, into God's truth, however exhausting, is among our most improving labours. And here I am not conscious of remissness. On the contrary, my exertions—though to men of firmer constitution they would have been moderate and light—have to me been often excessive, and have particularly unfitted me for a branch of duty, which, however important, I have thought myself bound to postpone to the former, but which, if strengthened, I hope yet to fulfil. I mean pastoral visiting. . . . . .

"I have had a growing conviction, that the ministry is needed in countries where Christianity is established, not so much to communicate *new* truths, as to *quicken* the truths which lie dead in the multitude; and that the qualification of a minister on which usefulness chiefly depends is, that he should speak of religion from deep conviction, with life and power, with affectionate interest, with a soul possessed and kindled by the truth,—that he should inculcate religion, not as a tradition lodged passively in the intellect, but as a reality of which he has the same living persuasion as of the most affecting interests of the present state. When I consider the earnestness and devotion demanded by such a cause as Christianity, I feel most thoroughly my imperfections, and pray God that I may live to preach with a fresh experience of its power. . . . . .

"In reviewing my preaching, I cannot hope that I have taught you truth unmixed with error, but I have a calm and cheerful conviction that I have taught the great and essential principles of our religion. I have particularly laboured to set before you a just view of God's all-benignant character, as the spring and motive of filial love and affectionate obedience. In regard to Jesus Christ, I have continually laboured

to impress you with the proofs of his Divine mission, the venerableness and loveliness of his spirit, the excellence of his religion, the benevolent purposes of his life and death, and your personal need of the aids which his gospel of grace and mercy gives. . . . . .

"In regard to the person or rank of Christ, you well know that a controversy has prevailed during my ministry, in which every minister has been compelled to take a part. My views on this subject have varied but little since my first connexion with you, and have been made known to you with entire frankness. The great fundamental principle of Christian belief is, that Jesus Christ was anointed, sent, commissioned by God, that he derived all his authority and offices and power from God, so that God who sent him is always to be adored as the first cause, the original, of whatever Christ communicates, and is to be our ultimate hope and confidence. I know nothing which appears to be more plainly a departure from this fundamental principle of Christian belief than the doctrine that Christ is God himself, equally entitled with the Father who sent him to the glory of originating our redemption, equally saving us by his own underived, infinite power. To teach this is to resist the current of Scripture language and Scripture precepts, to withstand Christ's great purpose, which was to glorify his Father,—and to shake the fundamental principle of natural as well as revealed religion, the *Unity of God.*

"My ministry on this point I look back upon with unmixed pleasure; nor have I any consciousness of having thus degraded Jesus Christ. His glory consists in the love with which God regarded him, in the offices with which God has invested him, in the likeness which he bears to God's purity and goodness,—not in being God himself; and they are the last to consult Christ's glory, who, instead of making him the brightest representative and the most exalted minister of his Father, throw a mist and doubtfulness over his whole nature, by making him the same being with his Father. I make these remarks with no disposition to bring reproach on any class of Christians; for I would not breathe a single word which might even seem to be unkind. But the circumstances of my ministry compel me, in reviewing it, to refer to the controversy which has shaken this church, and in which I have been charged with conducting my people into ruinous error. That I have not erred I ought not to affirm with the

decision and confidence too common in controversy, and therefore I would only say that I have inquired earnestly, and that inquiry has given me a calm, stable conviction of the great principle, that Jesus Christ is a distinct being from God, a derived, dependent being, not the self-existent and infinite Creator.

"Still, I have not been accustomed to preach Christ *as a mere man.* I have spoken of him as a peculiar being. He existed in a state of glory before his birth. Nor was his agency for our salvation confined to his teaching, and example, and suffering, and resurrection, while on the earth; but he is now a glorified, powerful agent in human affairs, our friend, benefactor, intercessor, and strengthener, and hereafter he will be our judge. These views I have urged, not because the mere belief of them is to save, but because they have seemed to me fitted to create a more earnest, affectionate reverent, and obedient regard to Jesus Christ,—such a regard as will lead us to form ourselves upon the model of his precepts and example. This, this is the essential point, and he who is faithful here has a saving faith, be his views of Jesus whatever they may. The greatest and most dangerous error of the age is the substitution of opinion, speculation, controversy, of noise and bustle about religion, for the *practice* of Christ's precepts, especially of those precepts which peculiarly characterize his religion,—filial love towards God, and self-denying, all-forgiving, disinterested, mild, humble, patient charity towards men. This *love*, this charity,—which is *the end* of the Christian commandment, which is greater than faith and hope, which is the very spirit of Christ, which is *God dwelling in us*,—I have made supreme in my ministry; and I trust that I have not laboured wholly in vain. . . . . .

"What I deplore in the state of this society and of the community is a languid, depressed tone of religious feeling, and the want of decision, energy, strong purpose, in applying Christianity to conduct. Religion slumbers under the embers, when it should be a quickening flame. It is my consolation, that on this topic I have preached plainly, faithfully, and not without earnestness, admonishing you of the perils of a state of society like ours, where a partial Christianity is enjoined by public sentiment and habit, and of course is easily adopted, whilst the *spirit* of Christianity is sadly wanting."

It will be readily understood that in the private papers,

from which the foregoing extracts have been made, are many passages of deeper interest than any which we have felt at liberty to publish; and it is chiefly the number, variety, minuteness, long continuance, of his observations upon his duty and his own character, which reveal Mr. Channing's conscientiousness. But probably even these specimens will serve to show with what wakeful hospitality he greeted each new suggestion, that came like a stranger to his tent-door, and how he made them his familiar guests, conversed with them, listened humbly to their message, and found by glad experience that he had thus entertained angels unawares. More and more the sublime opportunities of the age were opening upon him, and he gave himself with ever fresher zeal to the work of advancing what he saw to be a new era of humanity.

His usefulness among his own people, and in his immediate community, as well as his wide celebrity, suggested at this time to a small company of Unitarians in New York the thought of inviting Mr. Channing to remove to that city. On his return from Baltimore, in 1819, he had preached to them, and communicated an impulse which had continued to grow, and now, having formed themselves into the "First Congregational Society of the City of New York," they wrote to him in 1820, saying,—"We are convinced that your aid is indispensably necessary to the rapid and permanent success of the cause of uncorrupted Christianity in this quarter of the Union," and urging him, if possible, to enter upon this new field of labour. "The church which you have so essentially contributed to found," they conclude, "would be immediately built up, and we confidently anticipate that other societies would be formed, united in the same faith and hope." In a letter to a friend who had consulted him in relation to this project, he uses this language:—"Were I a young man, and unfettered by any engagements, I should prefer the situation you propose to any other within my hopes." But to the committee he made the following reply:—

"I cannot for a moment hesitate as to the answer which I should give to your application. I regard the situation to which you invite me as honourable and important. But Providence has appointed me another lot. Public, domestic, and private considerations, which I need not enlarge upon, leave me no liberty of forsaking the post which I now occupy. Its duties and responsibilities are, indeed, above my strength,

and I believe that no selfish regards attach me to it. But I think that I distinctly read in a variety of circumstances the will of God that I should continue here; and unless these change in a very unexpected manner, I shall remain whilst I have strength to labour."

Most fortunate was it for himself and for others, that he felt himself thus bound by duty to the city which had adopted him among her most honoured sons. For no sphere in the country could for a moment compare with Boston in its fitness to call out all the best powers of head and heart in a man so constituted. Its unity of character, high moral and intellectual activity, benevolent earnestness, social compactness, as well as its religious, literary, and philanthropic institutions, formed an atmosphere sufficiently stimulating, without dissipating his attention and wasting his energy, while he was too free and self-relying to be fettered by its subservience to leaders and *cliques*, its sudden fevers and chills of popularity, its fondness for conventional proprieties. The public considerations to which he refers in the foregoing letter, as forbidding him to leave his post, are sufficiently obvious. One of the "private" ones undoubtedly was, that he knew his own peculiarities thoroughly, and was more fully aware than any one else could be of his unfitness, at once from native dispositions and from confirmed habits, to be a polemic or a proselyter. A situation like that to which he was invited in New York would have demanded continual efforts of mind in a controversial direction, and required a zeal for Unitarian*ism* quite foreign to his unsectarian feelings. But his "domestic" ties also detained him in Boston, and to a notice of these we now pass.

When we last saw Mr. Channing in his home, the bright ring of brothers and sisters, clasped by a mother's love, was unbroken; and we purposely left untouched that image of the happy family, of which his own pure, gentle, heavenly affection was the guardian angel. But long before the period at which our narrative has now arrived, link after link had been removed by the various chances and changes of life,—by marriage, death, and inevitable dispersion. The eldest son, Francis, had early married, as we have already seen; and the eldest daughter, whose gentle heart was from girlhood interlinked in destinies with Washington Allston, had been united to him on his return to America after his studies in Italy, and had gone to England to share the uncertain fortunes of an

artist and a man of genius; the third sister had also removed with her husband to New York. Of the four younger brothers, two had entered into the learned professions, two into mercantile pursuits; and thus the once large household had dwindled away. In relation to his sister Ann's marriage, he had thus written to his grandfather Ellery:—

"A few hours ago, Washington and Ann, after their long and patient courtship, were united in marriage. We consider this a happy event; but Ann is too important a member of our family to be resigned without something like sorrow. The ceremony made us rather solemn. I do not wonder at this effect. The obligations of the marriage covenant are so extensive, and the consequences of the union so vast and uncertain, that I should pronounce a person thoughtless in the extreme, who should exhibit no seriousness on such an occasion.

"Your granddaughter has found, I believe, an excellent husband, one who, from principle and affection, will make her happiness his constant object. I hope that she will settle at no great distance from us; but we have not yet sufficient taste for the arts to give Mr. Allston the encouragement he deserves. We have, indeed, money enough to spend on cumbrous furniture, which another generation will throw into the garret as antiquated and absurd, but we cannot afford to adorn our walls with the productions of genius, which delineate the unchanging beauties of nature or the grandeur of man, and to which the lapse of time will impart only new value."

But sadder separations followed. In the summer of 1810, Francis, from the effects of fatigue while engaged in the laborious discharge of his duties as a lawyer, was seized with violent hæmorrhage, and sank rapidly into a decline. He retired to Newport, where he lingered for a time amid the beautiful scenery of his native island, receiving every kindness which the assiduous care of anxious friends could lavish, and in the autumn sailed with his wife and a favourite cousin for Rio Janeiro, with the hope of finding benefit in a change of climate. But his strength had been too much exhausted, and on the nineteenth day of the voyage he died. Months passed over, and the spring had opened before the intelligence reached Boston. It was on a Sunday, between the morning and the afternoon services, that a friend called to bear the tidings to those, in whose hearts hope and anxiety

had so long alternated. Mr. Channing was alone as he entered, and instantly read in his countenance a confirmation of their worst forebodings. He silently pressed his hand, requested him to mention it to no one else, and then retired to his study, to gain in prayer the calmness which he felt he needed, before he could tell his mother that her first-born had first entered into the spiritual world. But when at last he summoned the family, his own face was as serene as if he had been a messenger of joy. The next week was one of profoundest mourning, not merely because death had for the first time, after so long a period, entered their circle, nor merely because he who was taken had been a second father, but because they had parted from one who had made life rich by sweetness, affection, cheerful wisdom, incorruptible honour, high hope, and confiding piety. To William, this bereavement caused a grief as deep and poignant as a disciplined spirit, devoted to ends of universal good, could feel, for Francis was his bosom friend. But on the Sunday following he preached two appropriate discourses, in which, while not attempting to hide the sense of his own loss, he showed his people that an ascended angel had opened to him bright glimpses of heaven. A few broken sentences, given as they stand in his journals, will best show his state of feeling.

"A brother,—a friend,—a nurse in sickness,—a counsellor. One who so often and so tenderly thought of me,—of us all,—who was a guardian of our happiness. One who grew up with me. One who has engaged so many of my thoughts and feelings. The first-born,—the stay of his family. . . . .

"The first of our number taken from a circle which before was complete,—how grateful should we be that so many of us have been so long spared to each other, so large a family and so few breaches!—taken from the midst of us, never again to be seen and embraced on earth. . . . .

"God has made a melancholy breach in our number. May we feel that this is only the beginning of bereavement. Let us love each other more, and live prepared to resign each other. Let this separation be to survivors a bond of tender union. . . . .

"Taken at a distance from us, beyond the reach of our kind offices. His remains committed to the deep, never to be collected by us. . . . .

"Taken in the midst of life,—a son,—a husband,—a

father. In the full vigour of his powers, when most able to bless and to do good. . . .

"Let me prize more highly the character of my friends, be sensible to their excellences, be grateful to them, and labour to improve them. Let me with frankness and mildness reprove their faults and errors. Let me consider the excellence for which they were made, and be animated from God's love to seek their welfare. Have I done them justice? The duties of my dear brother have now devolved wholly upon me. Let this awaken me to all my social relations. . . . .

"'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart.' Do I understand this? Let affliction lead me to this divine intercourse, to this fixed thought upon God. He has taken away one object of hope and love, and thus taught us our dependence. Let us look to Him, live upon Him, live for Him. He is our Father, and loves us. It is to refine us, to bring us together again in happier circumstances, that he thus afflicts us. Let every feeling like selfishness be extinguished. This separates me from God. . . .

"God has wide connexions in this affliction. He made our friend not for us only, but for the creation,—for himself. His infinite purposes deserve our disinterested reverence. Let us submit. We are not overlooked. God loves us. We must not imagine that God thinks only of us or our family. We must view him in his relations to the infinity of beings. There are infinite beings, dearer and purer, who deserve far more of his regards. He seeks the universal interests of all his creatures. Abba! Father! how slowly, how faintly, do we realize this relation! How happy should we be that *His will* is done! It is our privilege to acquiesce. . . . .

"This dear sister, these dear children, are left to us as a legacy,—and our kindness and care for them must never be remitted. How do they call for all our attachment! These children require from me more than affection,—much watchfulness, forethought, study of their characters and propensities;—I must help to form them. What a new motive for self-improvement, disinterestedness, clearness of mind, temperance!"

The last of these extracts indicates the generous feelings of their writer, but only they who experienced the faithfulness with which, through every after year, he fulfilled the trust

which he thus acknowledged, can appreciate the depth and delicacy of his affection. Thenceforth he was a father to his brother's orphans, an ever-wise and ready counsellor to their widowed mother. Immediately after his sister's return from South America, he took her and her children home to live with his mother at the parsonage, and a few lines, written by her at that time to a friend, will show, more brightly than any second-hand picture could, how he then appeared in his family.

"While I am cheered and consoled by William's presence and conversation, I can bear everything cheerfully. It would be impossible to give you a full impression of the happy influence which he exerts. At his approach, all trials and perplexities disappear, every feeling but that of kindness vanishes, nothing is seen but smiles, nothing heard but conciliating and loving words. We not only seem, but feel, as human beings should; and I verily believe that, if I was always in his presence, I should never say or do or think anything inconsistent with the purest principles of Christianity. He is constantly occupied; but his few leisure moments are devoted to us, and you would be pleased to see how the children love him. They are fond of all their uncles, but William is the decided favourite. They run to him the moment he opens the door, and he can seldom get away except by stealth. Their highest reward for good conduct is a visit to his study, and their greatest punishment the denial of a game of romps or of a story from Uncle William.

It was in relation to these children that the following letter was written to their mother:—

"My observation of children has not led me to adopt that severe theology which ranks them among demons, but I am as little disposed to join with writers of fiction, and exalt them to the rank of angels. These little cherubs do not always show us in their beaming countenances the serenity of heaven, and some of their sounds would hardly accord with the music of that harmonious region. They have capacities of improvement, but capacities which are not to be filled in a moment. The soil is productive, but it bears weeds as well as useful plants, and needs patient and skilful cultivation. I look on a blooming, smiling child as I do on the earth in spring, when covered with verdure and flowers. I am delighted, and almost forget the uncertainties of the

future in the beauty and joy of the present moment. But I soon recollect that the blossom is not the fruit, that there is nothing permanent in this gay scenery, that the harvest is at a distance, that the valuable qualities of the mind and heart ripen slowly, almost insensibly, that they are exposed to a thousand adverse influences, that they must be guarded and cherished with a tender care, and that, after all, we may reap but sparingly where we have sown with a liberal hand. I do not mean that I consider education as ineffectual; but I believe it to be the part of wisdom not to form large expectations,—especially not to anticipate or desire very sudden improvement. Rapid growth does not characterize the most valuable productions of the natural or intellectual world."

But another of the family was now to be summoned to join Francis in the "Father's house." Under date of May 6th, 1815, are entered in Mr. Channing's journal the following brief fragments, which record his high sense of his sister's character, and his warm affection for one, who until her marriage had been his confidante.

"Yesterday brought us the sad tidings of Ann's death. She is gone,—that beloved and excellent sister,—removed after so long an absence. We were not permitted to minister to her last sufferings. The hands of strangers closed her eyes, a foreign land holds her remains."—[She had died in London, Feb. 2, 1815.]

"How tender she was!—how unwearied her kindness! As a child, how faithful! As a wife, how constant! In friendship how unalterable! . . . . .

"Can I ever forget the offices of a nurse which she proffered with so much affection in my last sickness? Can I ever forget her, the last by my bed-side at night, the first in the morning, giving me her strength, watching over me as a parent? . . . . .

"She lived to be useful. At home she toiled without weariness, and sacrificed herself without a complaint. . . . . .

"How silent, unostentatious, were her virtues! As a Christian, her principles were strong, her sense of duty deep, her heart humble, her professions sincere. She seemed to have acquired in early life the consideration of mature years. Cheerful and animated, she was still governed by the most delicate sense of propriety. How beloved she was by all who knew her!—she could not have had an enemy. Home was her sphere, her happiness. Bound to it by strong affection,

she sighed for no pleasures beyond it. She was a stranger to the world. . . . . .

"Her character particularly inspired confidence. Her heart spoke in her actions. . . . . .

"Her singular disinterestedness! In her sufferings abroad, what cheerfulness did her letters express! She was too kind to draw on our sympathy. God gave her many blessings; and now he has taken her to himself. . . . . .

"How she comes to me in her affectionateness! How kind she was to all around her! How silent were her careful assiduities! Under her calm exterior what deep, strong love! How did she bless us, even when least happy herself! . . . .

"God multiplies bereavements. Our family is falling to pieces. Is there no bond of union? Are we to be lost to each other? Let not dear Ann depart, without bearing me with her into futurity. Let us think only of following our friends. Let them lead us to heaven. Let the dead be in our hearts. Let us think and talk more as immortals. . . . . .

"She is gone, not lost. Let me rejoice in her joy. Is she not mindful of us? Did God form such ties that they might be broken? She may be near me. Let her witness in me only sincere affection and piety. . . . . .

"My mother is more than ever to be my care. I am now her oldest child; she leans on me. . . . . .

"Let her humility and disinterestedness be my pattern. Let me live to be more useful to my family, friends, people. Let my heart be the seat of every humane and devout affection. Let me be always employed in doing good to others, in denying myself, in rendering offices of kindness, especially of spiritual kindness."

The following extract from a letter to a friend will serve yet further to show how deep and tender was his affection for this most gentle and loving woman.

"*Boston*, May 9, 1815. You can easily conceive the feelings which this intelligence has awakened. Ann was no common friend. Her heart, which was, perhaps, the most constant in its affections that I have ever known, clung to her family with peculiar tenderness. The circumstances of her early life, particularly her attachment to Mr. Allston, separated her from the world, and seemed to extinguish all relish for its ordinary pleasures; and her whole life was given to her family. In her domestic relations I have hardly

known one so faithful; and the impression she has left on our hearts is one which time will never obliterate. One of her last acts, before leaving this country, was to unite herself to our church, an act which nothing but the diffidence and humility of her character had led her to defer so long. Since leaving us, we have not been able to observe her course, but the singular consistency and uniformity of her character is a pledge that she was found walking humbly in the path of her duty, and that her end was peace.

"I find that events of this kind disturb my mind much less than formerly. My increasing conviction of the *perfect* goodness of God, of his *paternal* character, of his minute and tender care, and of the riches of his *mercy* in Jesus Christ, the last truth in religion which men truly believe and feel, enables me more cheerfully to resign all things to his disposal. The thought, that God has made our souls immortal, with capacities of angelic purity and glory, and for the very end that we should ascend to heaven, to the society of angels, to moral perfection, to the most intimate union with Himself and his Son,—this thought, when it is felt by us, gives a new aspect to nature, to society, to all our present relations and connexions. I have found myself of late inclined to regard the future state of the blessed in a more affecting, and I think attractive, light than formerly, as a state of mutual dependence, of useful services, of the tenderest affections. Our friends, in leaving the body, do not put off humanity, they do not lose their affection for those they leave behind; and I would ask, Do they lose their concern, their pity? Are those sympathies which are so virtuous in our friends on earth, which Jesus felt, unworthy of heaven? An unfeeling heaven, a heaven where the good forget their friends, or are forbidden to feel deeply for them, is certainly not very interesting. Have you never felt, in listening to some descriptions of heaven, that they wanted sensibility? Can we bear that this bond of union between us sufferers on earth and the good in heaven should be dissolved?"

But this faithful son and brother was now himself to leave the roof which his own generous devotedness had made his mother's. In the summer of 1814, he had married his cousin, Ruth Gibbs, and after passing the winter in the parsonage, he was, by the earnest request of Mrs. Gibbs, to become for a time a member of her family. Here opened upon him a

life most rich in gentle happiness and beautiful affection. His mother-in-law, who was the sister of his father, had much of the character of her brother, and nothing could have been more benignant than her whole aspect and manner. Diffidence, blended with dignity, surrounded her with an atmosphere of sweet refinement, and, self-forgetful as a child, she found her joy in making all about her bright and content. The ample means which her husband had left enabled her also to gratify every hospitable impulse and elegant taste. In relation to his marriage, one of Mr. Channing's sisters thus writes:—

"You need not that I should tell you of the respect and tenderness which he always felt for woman; but you, perhaps, are not aware, that, with all his admiration of the gentler sex, he lived to the age of thirty-four or five, ignorant of the warmest affection of the heart. He had a great respect for woman's rights; and one of my last conversations with him was on the necessity of a law to secure to a married woman her property, the interest of which he thought should be always paid to her, without her husband's having any claim to control her in its expenditure."

It may be said, in a word, that the principle here expressed was the one by which Mr. Channing governed himself, with the most scrupulous delicacy and fastidious honour, throughout his married life.

We must leave the reader to infer, from the ever-widening cheerfulness of his later years, the fitness of this union. Inwardly and outwardly his lot henceforth was singularly serene. From about this time commenced, too, his summer visits to Rhode Island, where Mrs. Gibbs, who resided in Boston during the winter, retained a country-seat; and how much the few months annually passed amid the quiet charms of "Oakland" attuned and harmonized his spirit will hereafter abundantly appear.

In this connexion it may be agreeable to those who desire to form a full acquaintance with Mr. Channing, to learn his views of the marriage relation. They are thus presented in a sermon to his people in 1816.

"In this country, perhaps, the state of woman, the modes of life, and the moral sentiments which pervade the community, are more favourable to conjugal and domestic happiness than in any other part of the world. The culture which is bestowed on the female mind, and which distinguishes modern

times from the most refined periods of antiquity,—the respect which is accorded to woman, and which Christianity has done so much to inspire,—the reverence which prevails for the marriage vow, and the indignation which falls on conjugal infidelity,—the habit by which we are marked, of looking to our homes for the greatest part of our happiness, and the mixture of freedom and delicacy with which our general intercourse is conducted,—all contribute to elevate among us the female character, to render woman the associate of man's most refined pleasures and pursuits, and to confer on the conjugal connexion a tenderness and dignity which have rarely distinguished it.

"Women! in proportion as you contemplate the condition of your sex in other countries and other ages, whether in the rude scenes of savage life, or in the confinements of eastern voluptuousness, whether in the ages of Grecian and Roman splendour, when female culture extended but little beyond the distaff or the loom, or even in the highest ranks of life on the other side of the Atlantic,—I am persuaded that you will find reason to bless that Providence which has appointed you this goodly heritage; and I would call upon you to express your gratitude to God, and to vindicate the female character. . . . . .

"The indissolubleness of marriage should be distinctly and seriously weighed by those who have to form this connexion. Let not the most solemn engagement of life be an act of rashness and unreflecting passion. Let the heart take counsel of the understanding. Let the future as well as the present be brought into the account. Let not the eye or the imagination be trusted. Let the young man or the young woman inquire, Is this a friend with whom I would wish to spend, not only my youth, but my age, not only my health, but my sickness, on whom I can lean in my griefs, to whom I can confide my trials, to whom I am willing to resign my character,—who, if reverses should befal me, would help me to sustain hardship and distress, who will reciprocate my best feelings, who will walk with me to heaven?. . . . . .

"The different qualities by which man and woman are distinguished and contrasted prepare them for a peculiarly tender and beneficial union,—prepare them to supply each other's deficiencies, to perfect each other's character, and to bear distinct, yet equally necessary, parts in that most important work of the present state, the support and rearing

of a family. Marriage, then, ought to be regarded as instituted for a very noble end,—to awaken the heart, to exercise and strengthen its sensibilities and charities, to train it to the perfection of social virtue, to confer the highest enjoyments of friendship, to secure to each party the benefit of the other's strength, intelligence, and virtues, and to unite both in forming useful and virtuous members for the community.

"Were our views of the connexion thus elevated, did we always regard it as the great refiner of the heart, with what new cheerfulness would its duties be performed, its sacrifices be endured! Marriage is not viewed as it should be; the dignity of its end is overlooked. Too many rush into it without understanding its proper happiness and design, and of course without weighing its obligations. Can we wonder that its duties are so often neglected? . . . . . .

"There should be an habitual flow of minute and kind attentions. There are a thousand nameless, indescribable offices by which the heart expresses its interest, and which serve as a continual nourishment to the affections. There is danger that the familiarity of constant intercourse may produce a negligence of manners, a want of mutual respect, a carelessness as to pleasing. It is not, I fear, uncommon to see the fervour of youthful affection cooling into indifference. There may be no positive unkindness; there may be enough of decorum; but there is nothing of that love which overflows in minute and ceaseless kindness. Every day brings with it opportunities of mutual services, which to a stranger may seem unimportant, but which have their value when prompted by the heart. Accustom yourselves to multiply expressions of affection; aim to give pleasure; abstain from what will give pain; make little sacrifices. The atmosphere which feeds the flame is an invisible and silent agent, and in this respect it is an emblem of the minute and gentle offices by which conjugal affection is sustained.

"Another duty belonging to husbands and wives, included in what I have just stated, is this,—they should cultivate each other's society. They should avoid long and unnecessary separations, for these generate unconcern and produce an independence on each other which marks a declining attachment. As far as is consistent with their duties, they should include each other in all their plans. They should, in particular, share the same pleasures. There should be few solitary joys. The more of common objects, of common

tastes, of common resources they possess, the tender and more beneficial will be their union. They should often read together the same books, view together the same scenes of nature, enjoy the same society. It is a bad symptom, when these nearest friends seem weary of each other's society, when their plans of life seem to have few points of contact, when their happiness is derived from different springs. . . . .

"Let me mention one more duty belonging to husbands and wives. They should labour to improve each other's characters. This is the noblest purpose and use of the connexion. They who sustain this near relation, and have consequently great power over each other's minds, should regard one another in the light which the gospel throws on our nature as immortal beings, capable of great improvement, and whose highest interests are in a future state. Whilst mindful of each other's present happiness, their great solicitude should be that eternity should be secured. Let them watch over each other's hearts and minds with affectionate concern, mutually inviting honest and friendly admonition, and aiding and strengthening religious and benevolent sentiments. . . . . .

"This is the noblest use of the conjugal relation; and when marriage is thus employed, when it becomes a refiner of our nature, uniting the mind with God, and elevating it to heaven,—when they who sustain it prove to each other sources and cherishers of virtuous sentiment, and see in their present union a preparation for indissoluble friendship after death,—when marriage assumes this high and holy character, it is a felicity almost too pure for earth, it is a foretaste of the attachments of a better world."

In Mr. Channing's journals, under date of October, 1816, is found the following affecting passage, in relation to his first-born child. Its simple story needs no word of explanation.

"I remembered the love of Jesus to little children. I remembered the kindness of Him who has called himself our Father, and whose love must be infinitely purer than mine. Still my heart clung to her; and when I saw the last struggle on Wednesday afternoon, about twenty-four hours after her birth, I wept over her as if I had been deprived of a long-possessed blessing. After death her countenance became composed, and to me seemed the most beautiful, soft, gentle, and expressive, which I had ever seen at so early an age.

Thursday afternoon I carried her to the tomb, in the full and certain hope of a blessed resurrection. I feel as if my prayers for this little one, and my baptismal and funeral services, had formed a connexion between us. I feel as if I had a child in a happier world, who will know her past history, who will know how earnest were my wishes to bless her, to guide her to all virtue and felicity; and I hope yet to meet her, and to know that my prayers were not in vain, and to see that my child is more excellent, more happy, than I could have rendered her."

But in 1818 he had the privilege of writing to his sister in a happier strain, on the occasion of the birth of a daughter.

"Had I not learned so many lessons of this world's mutableness, I might be in danger of dreaming of a perfect joy on earth. But I do not forget where I am. I hope to remember why I am placed here, and to consider my new relation chiefly as an enlargement of my means of usefulness, and as giving me an object for the heart and for Christian care and exertion. I have not, as you may readily suppose, thought much about *education* as yet! I have a general persuasion, however, that children are educated chiefly by example, by a continual, insensible influence of those around them, and that the surest way to improve our children is to improve ourselves. I do not mean that this motive is as powerful as it should be. I hope, however, that we shall in some degree be governed by it, and shall labour to express no feeling or principle before our little girl which we should not wish her to adopt."

A few extracts from his papers will show the feelings with which he welcomed the young being intrusted to his care.

"What dignity Christianity sheds round the event of birth! How unimportant are the rise and fall of empires, in comparison with the entrance of an immortal soul into existence! Here is a new *agent* introduced into the universe,—a being now so frail, yet to grow to vast, to inconceivable influence,—a being now so dependent, yet to sustain immense, all-important relations. This child is to survive the changes of nature! We think only of the present. God has formed it for high and unknown purposes. . . . . .

"May this child never have cause to reproach us for evil example, neglect, ruinous indulgence. Through its whole

everlasting being, may it remember us, as, under God, its earliest, best friends. by whose kind care it learned to form itself upon the principles which are the foundation of eternal peace. Here is a mind to labour for, which is to live for ever. Our influence on it is to be perpetual. What a claim this little being brings with it! What latent capacities!—yet not one developed. Here is a being whom I may taint or raise to immortal glory. Is this child given to us to become ours? What a possession, to keep the heart alive. not for a day or year, but for life, for ages upon ages!"

And to his people, on the Sunday following, he said:—

"We have heard of a barbarous nation where the child was received with weeping. But this is not nature. There is instinctive, irresistible joy, when we look on the little being brought into a new world, with a form so perfect, a structure so delicate, a countenance so winning,—who comes a stranger to all our solicitudes, who sinks so securely into slumber, as if it were lodged in paradise, who has no resource in its own power for all the wants to which it is exposed, but finds supply beyond its needs in the affection that welcomes it. . . . . .

"We were made to love. This is the end of God in all social relations. It is his purpose that no man should live for himself. He has made life to be a succession of labours and sacrifices for the happiness of others. It is for this that children are made so helpless. They are born weak, that they should rest upon our strength. Their limbs cannot sustain their weight, that they may be folded in our arms and warmed upon our breasts. It is for this that God gives them such sweetness, innocence, beauty. His purpose is to enlarge our hearts by generous toils and self-denials. The hardest heart melts at the sight of infancy. In every home, however rude, however splendid, one being is embraced with sincere love, and that is the new-born child. The young woman of fashion, whose affections have been dissipated by false pleasures, becomes another person as she clasps her infant in her arms. New tenderness fills her bosom, new solicitudes and hopes spring up. She learns to live in the happiness of this little dependent creature. And in the house of the poor labourer, what overflowing tenderness is poured out to welcome, what toils are cheerfully borne to rear, the child whose birth imposes a perpetual burden! Children call forth a tenderness which softens the whole character in all relations. We enter a warmer region, when

we approach a home gladdened by their artlessness, simplicity, confiding affection, playful gladness. The heart awakes to healthier action, and becomes more susceptible to all good impressions. Home is the nursery of the heart; children are really our teachers, and the lessons which they communicate are love, self-forgetfulness, interest in the welfare of others. I am persuaded that just in proportion as the domestic affections have opportunity to expand in any community, is general kindness, sympathy, philanthropy diffused. . . . . .

"A Christian parent, on the birth of a child, has sentiments like these brought with power to his mind:—'Here is a being committed to me worth more than the world. I am now honoured with an infinite trust. This cradle contains a *life*, the issues of which are shrouded in the solemn uncertainties of the everlasting future. Here is not only a helpless being to be loved, but a growing being to be trained. It is to be influenced in its growth by every one around it. It is to learn the language which falls upon its ear, to catch the manners which pass before its eye, to receive impressions so easily made and so indelible that they will seem like nature. It is to reflect not only the countenances, but the characters, of those who have given it existence. It is a creature of sympathy and imitation, which will receive traces never to be erased. What a trust! God's noblest work is put into my hands. I may do much to inscribe God's image on this immortal mind. I may do much to form a friend for society, a source of good for mankind. I may do much to give a new inhabitant to heaven, a new member to the companies of the blessed. Thanks to thee, O God, for the relation I sustain! By thy grace I will fulfil its duties.'. . . .

"It is, indeed, a most merciful appointment of God, that children, by needing so much care, impose such responsibility. Many, many parents would have wasted life, neglected and destroyed themselves, had not the parental relation awakened them to reflection. The solemn thought, that the immortal mind intrusted to them might perish through their neglect, has called multitudes home to their own hearts and to God. They have been brought to feel the importance of their own future interests, in thinking of those of their children. The consideration that their own characters would be communicated to those whom they loved more than themselves, that their children would receive from them principles, habits, and feelings, has induced a watchfulness, a regularity of

speech and conduct, and an application to duty, by which their own souls have been purified. Perhaps we little suspect how much of the virtue of a community is to be traced to the strong feeling of responsibility which is awakened in the mind by the parental relation. I repeat it, children are inestimable blessings, by calling forth the consciences of their parents. The instructions we impart come back upon ourselves. . . . . .

"Let me add one more thought, most familiar, yet most affecting. In a child we gain a being who can return as well as receive kindness. The love of a good child,—does earth hold as rich a blessing? Its smiles and cheerful obedience repay our toils during its youth; and who can express the value of its affectionate attentions as we advance into age? Who can smooth the pillow of sickness like the hand of the daughter whose sensibility we nurtured in her tender years? Who can sustain our infirm steps like the son whose manly virtues we helped to form? Who would not have his eyes closed, his remains committed to the dust, by filial affection? A good child is a blessing through life, and a blessing after death. I cannot think that in another world we shall forget the kindness which guided and watched over us in this. If any earthly sentiment survive beyond the grave, surely it will be the gratitude of the child and the joy of the parent, when they meet in heaven."

On the occasion of the baptism of one of his children, Mr. Channing thus expressed his views of that rite, which some of the readers of this biography may be glad to know.

"The question is asked, 'Why apply a religious institution to a child before he can comprehend or desire its benefits?' Such a question overlooks the great fact of man's existence, that we are born into various human relations, that by birth we enter into a society, into a religious community, as well as into a family. It is in vain to say that children should be left to choose a form of religion for themselves. They cannot escape the influence of family, of country. If Christian principles do not restrain and elevate them, other principles will usurp control over their susceptible years. Such is man's nature and condition. From these considerations it follows, that Christianity must stoop to the cradle, and take the infant into its arms from the hour of birth. It must make the first claim to children, and set its seal upon them from their earliest breath. It is wise and fit that by some

visible sign our religion should lay its hand of benediction upon the young beings who are to be trained by its discipline. The child is, indeed, unconscious of the meaning of our act in baptism; but at that moment it is an intelligent and immortal being, having within itself the seeds of affections and capacities which are to unfold for ever. It soon is to become conscious of that filial feeling which is the simplest element of piety. And how expressive is the rite by which it is given up to Jesus Christ to receive the influences of his religion! . . . . .

"These remarks help us to answer the question most satisfactorily as to the use of baptism to a child. To answer this question, some Christians have thought it necessary to say that baptism communicates to the infant Divine grace, that it is a regenerating ordinance, that when the water touches the body, God's spirit touches the mind, and that a new nature is thereby implanted. This doctrine will hardly maintain its ground in the school of sound theology. Our whole experience opposes it. This institution is useful to children by exhibiting their claims to Christ's religion, and the design of this religion to operate on their minds. By baptism the light and privileges of the gospel are pledged to them by their parents. By it they are introduced into the Christian community. The water of baptism is a mark of the finger of God upon their foreheads, for ever showing forth the great ends for which a human life is given. . . . . .

"This institution is designed to bring strongly to the hearts of parents a consciousness of their influence over their children, and to bind them solemnly to a just use of this influence. Parents are swayed by the ideas which they habitually associate with their children. It is important, therefore, that they should take high and generous views of their destiny. But the very helplessness and ignorance of children tempt us to forget the greatness of their nature; and their animal wants while young, and their worldly interests as they advance, continually incline us to consider their earthly good as of primary concern. Now the Christian religion teaches us to treat the infant with *reverence,* to welcome it as the heir of unknown worlds, to see in its early intelligence the dawning of a light which is never to be quenched, but to brighten for ever. To beget in us this noble way of thinking and feeling, is it not right that by some positive, definite act, by a public religious form, parents

should solemnly consecrate their children to God and Christ, should recognise them as spiritual beings, should set them apart in the eyes of all men for a holy training and an immortal destiny?"

Two sons were in a few years also born to Mr. Channing; and, settled in a delightful home in the vicinity of his mother and of his wife's family, surrounded by a society which listened to his every word with interest and lent a ready aid to all his plans, esteemed and loved by the whole community in which he lived, and every year becoming more widely influential, he felt, as he said to a friend, that "his condition was as prosperous as he could well bear; and that, were it not for almost daily debility and suffering, he should fail of the discipline of pain which every being needs to purify away his self-love." In reference to his constant and increasing infirmity, he writes thus in his journals:—

"Let me gratefully accept the affliction of sickness, and chiefly desire that God's ends shall be answered. Let not one sinking, repining thought come over me."

"Sickness has temptations. Let me not pamper self, but with distinct purpose employ all means to health, as fitting me for usefulness and for the service of God and man."

So enfeebled had he become in the winter and spring of 1822, that it was determined, at length, that he should try the effect of a voyage and a year's journey abroad. In consequence of this necessity, the Society in Federal-street, with the alacrity which they had always shown to promote his comfort, passed, at a full meeting, the following votes:—

"1. That the Standing Committee be authorized to engage some person, with the concurrence of the Rev. Dr. Channing, to supply his pulpit for one year.

"2. That the Rev. Dr. Channing be released from all services for his parish for one year, and that Deacon Davis be requested to express to him the earnest wish of this meeting to do all in their power to conduce to the restoration of his health.

"3. That the Standing Committee be authorized to raise by subscription the sum of one thousand dollars to defray the additional expense of the year.

"D. D. ROGERS, *Chairman.*
"BENJ. GUILD, *Clerk.*"

On May 26, the Sunday before he sailed, he thus communicated to his people his reasons for going abroad:—

"The circumstances which have led me to resolve on a voyage are known to all; and I am greatly encouraged by the unanimity with which my purpose has been seconded by my society. I have formed it reluctantly, after many solicitations and admonitions from judicious friends, and after a faithful trial of the means of health at home. From the moment of my decision, I have, indeed, laboured to set before my mind the pleasures and benefits of visiting the Old World, of traversing countries which have kindled my imagination almost from infancy, whose literature has been the food of my mind, and where nature and society present aspects hardly to be conceived amidst the freshness of our own institutions. But these considerations, while they fortify my purpose, had no influence in originating it. I do not mean to imply that such motives are criminal; yet to one sustaining the relations which I do, home is the field of duty, and to me it has been so happy, that my mind until lately shrunk from the thought of quitting it.

"The circumstance which has decided me to leave you is the apprehension, which experience has almost made a certainty, that, if I remain, I shall linger through life in a condition unfavourable to my own improvement and to public usefulness, in that middle state between sickness and health, that alternation of animation and languor, that liability to sink under any considerable exertion, which I have experienced to a great degree ever since my connexion with you, and which my late indisposition has sensibly increased. More than a year has now elapsed since the interruption of my professional labours, and when I look back on this period, my spirit droops at the thought of continuing to drag on existence inactively and unprofitably, nursing a frail body, seeking relaxation as a task, now gaining and now relapsing, and not only put to silence on Sundays, but compelled through the week to forego the books and means of improvement which from early years have been to me as daily bread. The reflections, which, in these circumstances, are apt to fasten on a minister's mind, are such as others cannot easily understand. Conscious of past deficiencies, he is solicitous to repair them, whilst, for aught he knows, the Lord of the vineyard may have already dismissed him as an unprofitable labourer. I mean not to speak of the past year as of one of great suffer-

ing, but in the inactivity to which I have been reduced, an effort has been often needed to sustain my spirits, and my feelings, as well as my sense of duty, strongly urge me to make a decided effort for health. If I fail, I shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing that I have declined no labour for recovering the capacity of serving God and my fellow-men."

Chap. VI.—EUROPEAN JOURNEY.

Æt. 42–43. 1822–1823.

Before following Mr. Channing in his travels abroad, it may be well, for the end of showing the delight with which he looked on nature and his capacity for enjoying beauty, to present some sketches of scenery from letters written during a journey through New Hampshire and Vermont, in the summer of 1821.

"*Centre Harbour, New Hampshire*, July 31, 1821. Very soon an ascent opened to us a prospect which made us forget past inconveniences. On our right, we discovered a noble range of mountains, their declivities towards us thrown into shade, and their waving outline, gentle and beautiful, forming an affecting contrast with their grandeur and solemnity. I have just learned that among them was the Ossipee, of which you have often heard. Below them was a sheet of water of considerable extent, called the 'Little Bay,' the more distant part of it darkened by the eminences beyond, and the part which was nearest to us brightened by the sun's light, which fell on it through a soft mist. The mist was dense enough to be impressed with the shadows of the trees on the neighbouring heights, so as to give a singular mixture of light and shade in its thin and ethereal substance, yet not so dense as to prevent a dim, visionary reflection of the trees in the tranquil surface of the water. Have I helped you to look through my eyes?"

"*Wednesday morning. Centre Harbour.* From the east windows, at which I now sit, and out of which my eye often steals, I look down immediately on the lake, but not on such a sheet of water as your imagination probably represents to you. I learned, before I reached it, that the Winnipiseogee was studded with islands of considerable extent, and in great number, so that you can take in but a small part of it from

the shores. But whilst this detracts from its unity and grandeur, you find beauties of another kind. The channels which divide the islands, the numerous points and projections, the shores fringed with trees, by multiplying the lights and casting shadows on the water, give great interest to the scene. The shore opposite to me is covered with pines, stretching to some distance, and beyond them rises the noble Ossipee, which, covered with the light mist that now floats over it, I have, more than once, when accidentally glancing up, taken for a vast mass of clouds. My eye rests upon it with increasing pleasure, and I feel, that, were I neighbour to a mountain, I should establish a friendship with it, perhaps more intimate than I have formed with any part of nature. My mind seems to enlarge, to swell with these majestic forms, which claim kindred with the skies."

"*Sharon, White River, Vermont*, Aug. 1. I wish I could communicate to you my sensations. The river was just below us to the west. The country on the other side, of which our view had been limited by hills rising from the stream, opened, both to the north and south, into two wide, far-reaching, and gently ascending valleys,—if, indeed, they were hollowed enough to be so called. These valleys, or rather expanses, did not swell gradually through their whole extent, as they receded to the horizon, but were intersected in a free and bold style with elevations rising one behind another, each giving to the eye a line of shrubbery and foliage, on the tops of which the sun shed a rich, mellow light, whilst the sides towards us were thrown into shade. Not that there was much regularity in this; for the passing clouds distributed unequally the splendours of the sunshine. The prospect was magnificent, to a wonderful degree, and you would have called it grand, had not beauty—a soft, touching beauty—so melted its parts into one another, and so spread harmony and gentleness over the whole, as to assert its claim above sublimity in the scene. We began with expressing our admiration; but silence soon showed that the heart was too much softened for talking. When I tell you that tears flowed, you will understand that they were not mine, for the fountain lies very deep in me; but I give you no fiction. In one sentiment we all afterwards agreed, that we could endure the grandeur through which we had lately passed, much better than this loveliness and tenderness of beauty. The last exhausted us; the first gave an ex-

ulting, triumphant feeling. I relate merely our sensations. I have been too busy to analyze or to try to explain them."

"*White River*, Aug. 6. As I ascended towards its source, its animating characteristics grew more and more striking, and I felt its power. It is, indeed, a peculiar stream, and forms a remarkable contrast with the Connecticut, into which it empties. The moment you leave the point where they meet,—I may say, the very first step you take on White River,—you feel that you are forming a new acquaintance, that you have found a river of different features and habits, not contented to wind slowly and silently through fertile and smooth banks, but full of spirit and youthful sportiveness; loving solitudes, not for meditation, but that it may leap and dance without restraint, and listen to its own brisk murmurs, multiplying its quick turns, as if eager for change,—rushing against the stones and rocks, like youth engaging in mock contests.

"The whole stream has an exhilarating character from its beginning; but it was not until the afternoon, under a glorious sky, that I felt its power. In a short time, the banks began to rise more precipitously and to a greater height, and the turns of the river were more sudden, and the bank on which we rode steeper, so that we found ourselves in the midst of the wildest scenery which I remember. Before, behind, all around us, were heights thrown together in a confused manner, sometimes quite hemming us in, sometimes opening into views of wide extent, and receiving from the sun a most various, shifting light. Indeed, such confusion of lights and shades, of effulgence and fainter illumination, you cannot easily conceive. I found the effect on my own mind quite different from that of former scenery. It was not as exalting as the mountain grandeur of New Hampshire, but it exhilarated me more, and gave me the very excitement which an invalid needs.

"This very striking scenery continues but a few miles. Then the banks recede more gradually, the hills slope more gently; the stream seems willing to refresh itself, amidst its brisk movements, with spots of quiet beauty. Still it keeps up its consistency. It slumbers nowhere; and when its surface is smoothest, you will here and there see a rock or stone breaking its uniformity, and making its motion visible by a little eddy or a line of depression on the water."

"*Sandy Hill, New York*, Aug. 7. After passing through much the same scenery as we had seen towards the end of the preceding day's journey, we addressed ourselves to a labour which we had anticipated with no little interest; I mean the ascent of the Green Mountains. Here we left our pleasant companion, the White River, and began to follow one of its branches, a narrower, but still noisier and more precipitous stream. Very soon we were conscious of having entered a nobler and more solemn region than we had yet explored. I had expected to scale mountains which were to open to me an immense extent of prospect; but I found myself plunged into one of nature's deepest recesses. I ascended through a cleft, on both sides of which rose steeps, sometimes of a vast height, clothed with woods to their very tops. So profound a solitude I have never known. I seemed to feel as if I were cast into a world of immeasurable forests. So entire and absorbing is the impression which you receive from the heights and depths around you, any one of which has power to fill the eyes and the mind by its masses and sweeps of noble trees, that the scenes you have left are blotted out; you live for the time only in the grand, glorious scene that swells around you. The openings which are here and there made into the forests, by large rocks or the rushing stream, only seem to conduct your eye into interminable depths of foliage and shade. Above you, after you have been ascending perhaps a mile, tower mountain-tops, which seem to sink you into a valley, though you are conscious of having left the lowland world far beneath. This passage through the mountains gives no particular scenes to be described. Its power lies in the general, deep, overpowering impression which it makes. . . . . .

"On Tuesday morning, we began to follow again the Onion River, which wound among hills less bold than those we had seen the day before; but, viewed through the misty light of the morning, they gave us continual pleasure, until we reached a spot which had power to efface for a time all other impressions. Nobody had whispered to us that we were to meet anything extraordinary. You will judge, then, of our astonishment and delight, when, after hearing for a few minutes an unusual tumult, we found ourselves on a bridge, which discovered to us, on both sides, a deep, rocky, perpendicular ravine, through which the river, contracted to a few yards, was rushing, raging, foaming, as if it had re-

served all its might and passion for this single spot. The ravine or cleft seemed to me a quarter or sixth of a mile in length, and so straight, that from two or three points the eye could command nearly its whole extent. The cliffs rose perpendicularly to the height, I should think, of forty to sixty feet, in parallel lines of solid rock. That so remarkable a rapid should not even have been named to us was matter of wonder, and proved how little impression is made by the mighty works of God. We clambered to the highest point of the banks, and looked down the giddy steep with an emotion which had hardly been surpassed at Glen's Falls. . . .

"We soon found ourselves entering a region which drew from us exclamations of increasing delight and admiration. We had heard that the pass through which our road lay was called 'The Gulf,' and that we were to pass the range which is eminently called the Green Mountains, not by scaling them, as before, but by threading a valley at their feet. Still, so little was said, that we expected little. How can I express our feelings when the true glory of this spot was revealed to us? Instead of ascending, as on our former route, a long and steep cleft, hemmed in on each side by precipices of forests, we now followed a road of easy ascents and descents. On one side the bank rose suddenly, so that its height could not easily be seen; but on the other rushed the branch of the White River, removing to a sufficient distance the mountains from which it separated us, so as to enable us to see distinctly their declivities, and outlines, and forests. In our former passage, we left our carriage from necessity, —here, from choice,—and we walked perhaps a mile through this deep valley, lifting our astonished eyes to the towering and beautiful summits, which seemed worthy of the region they inhabited.

"Represent to yourself a succession of mountains through more than a mile's extent, rising almost perpendicularly from their bases, sometimes stretching before us in a line, sometimes forming a majestic sweep, opening as we advanced, so as to discover their outlines and distinct masses, and clothed to the very top with the freshest, richest, most luxuriant foliage. I was astonished to see such perpendicular heights, in which it seemed scarcely possible that trees should take root, so closely wooded that the eye could not discover a speck of dark earth amidst their boundless verdure. To say that the woods were green would give you no idea of them.

They had the brightness and tenderness of spring, with the fulness of summer; and, instead of presenting a confused mass of verdure, their tops were so distinct, that the grace and majesty of particular trees might easily be traced. The light and temperature favoured us, and we lingered, most unwilling to take the last look."

In a letter, written soon after his return, and which is of additional interest, as showing how solemn were his associations with the scenery of Newport, he thus refers to the influence of natural beauty.

"*Portsmouth, Rhode Island*, Sept. 6, 1821. That journey was a specimen of the life I have led for many years. One day undoes the work of many weeks. When I seem to have gained strength, a cold, caught I know not how, or some derangement of the system, perhaps produced by some slight irregularity, takes from me my power of body and mind, and then I slowly work my way upwards, to fall as low again.

"My journey, I have said, was not lost; and this I should say, even had I returned without one additional particle of strength; for it left impressions and recollections which will make me richer and happier for life. This magnificent creation has been to me, even from my boyhood, a principal source of happiness; but I never entered into its spirit, felt its power and glories, as on this journey. I should hardly dare to travel over the same ground again, lest the bright images which are treasured up in memory should be dimmed by a second sight.

"But nature was not my chief enjoyment. I owed much to my companions, who gave more than they received. Perhaps, if I were to name the circumstance in which I consider myself most enviably distinguished, I should say, it is the intimacy which I have enjoyed, and still enjoy, with so many of the first and best of your sex. I could not have ended my journey with as unrepining a spirit as I did, had I not had a home to receive me, which I am weak enough to think the best home on earth, and which had gone with me and secretly mixed with all my joys among the mountains, lakes, and rivers, which seemed to divide me from it. . . . . .

"I was powerfully reminded of the early years of my life, when these shores were my favourite and almost constant haunts. Then, before I knew you, I had not 'found rest to my soul,' for I was very much a stranger to true religion. My spirit, consumed with passionate fires, thirsted for some

unknown good, and my body pined away to a shadow under the workings of a troubled mind. Then I spent almost whole days on the sea-shore, where the majesty and power of nature, absorbing, exalting me, and transporting me beyond myself, ministered most happily to the diseased soul. Strange as it may seem, I can recollect that I became buoyant and exhilarated in proportion to the wildness and sublimity around me, and I leaped for joy when a wave, which seemed to menace ruin, broke on the rock where I stood, and mounted in clouds to the skies. Thanks to God, those days of tumult are past, and an existence, the beginning of which is still a mystery to me, and which was wrapt in many clouds, has opened into blessings which I should not have dared to anticipate."

It was at the close of the month of May, 1822, that Mr. Channing bade farewell to his three blooming children, to his parent, family, friends, society, and, in company with his wife, sailed for England. On the eve of departure, he thus wrote to his mother:—

"May 27th, 1822.

"My dear Mother:—I cannot go without leaving you a line. At this moment, when I think of my approaching separation from you, I recal, with more than usual tenderness, your affection and your claims, and I pray God to reward and crown you with his best blessings.

"It is one of my greatest griefs, that I do not leave you in better health, and I beg you to neglect no means of building it up. I inclose a hundred dollars, which I wish you to spend very much for this object.

"I cannot but believe that you would be happier, if you would relinquish housekeeping; and you will see, in my letter from Lucy, how entirely she agrees with me. Ruth joins with me in assuring you, that, if you could be happy at our house on our return, we should rejoice to receive you.

"I hope you will not be anxious about us. We sail under every advantage, and I have a cheering hope that I shall return to be more to my family and people than I have been. You will often hear from us, either immediately or through other friends; and should anything prevent free communication, you will remember that we are always under the care of Him who alone makes home a place of safety, and who can make every place equally secure. My spirits are won-

derfully sustained. I go with a cheerful, confiding mind, and hope that, whilst I am remembered with affection, I shall not be with sorrow.

"My dear mother, may many years be added to your life, and may they be brightened by the increasing affection, usefulness, and virtues of your children. You will be the object of my daily prayers, and I know I shall not be forgotten in yours.

"Your grateful and affectionate son."

With the aid of extracts selected from his journals and correspondence, let us now rapidly follow Mr. Channing during a year which, with all its rich experiences, was to him one of exile, rather than of enjoyment. And first, from the notes of his voyage, we will take a few passages which manifest the buoyant, fresh joy with which he watched the changes of ocean.

"*June* 25. On this day I was exhilarated by a truly magnificent scene. The wind was strong and fair, and had called the ocean, after its long repose, into new life. The sky, obscured with clouds, gave to the waves that dark, polished hue, for which I can find no name, and which is one of their most beautiful colours. Exceedingly minute ripples hurried, swept, flew over the surface, and marked the fleetness of the wind as distinctly as if that subtile element had become the object of sight. Every sail was expanded and swelled into a graceful form, as if eager to enjoy the favouring breeze. The ship seemed to have caught the life and spirit of the elements, rushing forward, as for a prize, cleaving the dark waves, and dashing them from her sides in an azure sparkling brine and a foam of snowy whiteness, as if to brighten and deck her triumphant flight. In such moments, the soul seems to add to its own energies the power which is vivifying nature and exults in the consciousness of a more intense existence. . . . . .

"The sight of the sea-bird struck me with its loneliness. I thought of its spending the night on the ocean. But I remembered that it had no home to forget, and considered what a bed it must find on the waves. The sea-bird is rocked in nature's cradle, and enjoys a sleep which few find on shore. How many, torn with passion or remorse, might envy it! There is a striking contrast in the rough, mighty ocean being thus the chosen dwelling of repose. . . . . .

"The soul and nature are attuned together. Something within answers to all we witness without. When I look on

the ocean in its might and tumult, my spirit is stirred, swelled. When it spreads out in peaceful blue waves, under a bright sky, it is dilated, yet composed. I enter into the spirit of the earth, and this is always good. Nature breathes nothing unkind. It expands, or calms, or softens us. Let us open our souls to its influences. . . . . .

"The ocean is said to rage, but never so to me. I see life, joy, in its wild billows, rather than rage. It is full of spirit, eagerness. In a storm, we are not free to look at the ocean as an object of sentiment. Danger then locks up the soul to its true influence. At a distance from it, we might contemplate it as a solemn minister of Divine justice, and witness of God's power to a thoughtless world; but we could associate with it only moral ideas,—not a blind rage. At least, I have seen nothing which gives nature an unkind expression. . . . . .

"We talk of *old* ocean, hoary ocean; I cannot associate age with it. It is too buoyant, animated, living. Its crest of foam is not hoariness, but the breaking forth of life. Ocean is perpetual youth. . . . . .

"In a gale, you are struck with the tumultuous restlessness of the ocean. Instead of lengthened waves, it mounts and swells irregularly, as if too full of life, too impatient, to submit to any rule. The waves chase one another eagerly, and with an intractable vehemence, and break and whiten through excess of spirit. They do not seem to rise by a foreign impulse, but spontaneously, exultingly. You are reminded of the agency of the wind, not by the large, precipitous masses of water which are tossed so confusedly around you, for these seem instinct with their own life; you see the wind in their torn, and ruffled, and swept surfaces, and in the spray which flashes and is whirled and scattered from their tops. It is truly an animating scene. You feel yourself in the midst of life and power, and hear air and ocean joining their voices of might to inspire a kindred energy. There is awe,—not a depressing, but triumphant awe. Our spirits mix with the elements, and partake the fulness of their power.

"There is constant variety in such a scene. The 'trough,' as the sailor calls it, is, in fact, a valley in the ocean, and, on each side, waves higher than the ship bound your view. In a moment, you ride on these mountains, and a wide horizon opens on you, the distinct line of which is broken by heaps of ocean, sometimes rising into peaks, which break as soon as

formed, and give place to new creations. Vast structures thus grow and vanish almost in an instant, and the eye finds no resting-place in the perpetual revolutions. The waves, swelling above, and approaching, as if to overwhelm you, though they do not alarm, show a power so akin to destruction, as to give a momentary sensation of danger, and the spirit feels something of the pleasure of escape, when the ship is seen to triumph over its invaders.

"There is, too, a feeling of elevation, when, in such a scene, where nature is in uproar, and putting forth around us her mightiest energies, we are conscious of inward serenity, feel ourselves unshaken in the tumult and alive to adoration and joy. The soul has a consciousness of greatness, in possessing itself, and in converting into the nourishment of its noblest emotions, the might and majesty of the universe. . . . . .

"There is great beauty joined with this majesty, as through all nature. We seldom see more power. The awful mountain top delights to bathe its grandeur in the richest, softest beams of the rising or setting sun; sweet flowers wave and smile in the chasms of the precipice: and so the mountain billow often breaks into sparkling spray, and the transparent arch beneath shines with an emerald brightness, which has hardly a rival in the richest hues of the vegetable creation.

"After witnessing a gale, I was shut up for several days in the cabin, and did not return to the deck until a remarkable change had taken place. A calm had succeeded. It was hard to connect what I now saw with my last view of the ocean,—to feel that I was looking on the same element. The irregular, broken, wildly-tossing, tumultuous billows had vanished, and lengthened, continuous, slowly-advancing swells followed one another, not as in pursuit, but as if finding pleasure in gentle motion.

"Instead of bursting into foam, or being tossed into infinite inequalities by the sweeping, hurrying winds, their polished, molten surface, whilst varied by soft flowing lines, was unruffled by a single breath. They seemed, as they rolled in regular intervals towards us, like the gentle heaving of a sleeping infant's breast. I did not feel as if the ocean was exhausted by its late efforts, but as if, having accomplished its manifestations of awe-inspiring might, it was now executing a more benignant ministry, speaking of the mercy and the blissful rest of God. Perhaps no image of repose is so

perfect as the tranquillity of an element so powerful, and so easily wrought into tumult. I looked, and was at peace."

The following hints may serve to illustrate the observant and inquiring habits of the writer. He was apparently reading, at the time, Playfair, and Brande's "History of Chemistry," the progress of which science he watched through life with eager expectation and admiring awe.

"The light and heat of the sun on the ocean may seem unprofitable. Not so. The heat is absorbed in vapour, and, when given out by condensation of vapour into rain, it is imparted to the atmosphere. Hence good done by raining, at sea as well as on land. Air is softened. . . . . .

"Heat greater at sea than on shore, because so much heat is evolved by evaporation and condensation, less absorbed than on shore. Hence islands warmer, especially if fogs predominate. . . . . .

"The wind not useless on ocean. Evaporation greatly produced by succession of strata of air, and by *forms* given to *waves*,—the curve. Does not motion, too, separating the spray, favour evaporation? . . . . .

"Evaporation and condensation,—may they not purify atmosphere? Rain water not pure. May not this action in the atmosphere do good? How far may electricity be evolved in these processes? We speak of air as close, stifling, &c., and its fitness for respiration depends on what we cannot discover. Electricity a cause. There is constant solution and crystallization of salt in ocean, by evaporation and rain. Is no electricity generated here? . . . . .

"The heat given, by formation of vapour, to upper regions of atmosphere may be very useful; for, were they not thus heated, the contrast between them and those lower might be so great, as to render the exchange which takes place between them injurious. Heated air ascends, and is replaced, one would think, from above. . . . . .

"The ocean preserved from heat by evaporation. Hence, winds, passing over it, refresh warm countries. This heat, withdrawn from the surface, is given out by condensation in upper regions which need it. What a beautiful order! . . . . .

"What a beautiful appointment, that the sun, which heats and dries the earth, should raise the cloud to shelter it, and the rain to moisten it; and that heat, which seems at first at war with moisture, should conjoin with it in rearing the plant! . . . . .

"Nature subsists by counteracting powers; and in this we see wisdom, arrangement, beauty. . . . . .

"Moisture the universal nutriment, and what a noble fountain of it! . . . . .

"Strong winds at sea are essential to the fulfilment of its functions,—to evaporation and transportation of vapour, as well as to navigation. The ocean useless without wind, and how it is swept by it! . . . . .

"A beautiful appointment, that the sun gives impulse to the winds, by which his beams are mitigated on shore, by which the vapour of ocean is multiplied and transported, and, of course, by which the earth is preserved from being parched. . . . . .

"How beneficial is motion in air and sea! Elements capable of being quickened by heat keep the balance of the universe. . . . . .

"Great powers in the universe, balancing one another by mighty energy, make creation more interesting. Would not less intensity of heat, creating and requiring less motion of winds, vapours, sea, be attended with less activity of animal and vegetable nature? These great powers in nature call forth great energy and skill in man, give impulse and life to the soul, reveal the sublimity and beauty of creation. . . . . .

"What immense distributions of moisture and equalizations of temperature are needed! Are the agents too mighty?"

On landing at Liverpool, Mr. Channing met with the warmest welcome from many liberal-minded friends, whose hearts had been already prepared, by his writings and reputation to receive him. But he found himself utterly unfitted, by weakness and depression, to bear the pleasing excitement of forming acquaintances; and, hastily bidding farewell to the intelligent, humane, refined, and munificent circle which opened to him their hospitable homes, he departed upon his journey to the Lakes. A few extracts from his journals will show what refreshment he found amidst the exquisite scenery of Westmoreland and Cumberland.

"*Lancaster*, July 11. The castle at Lancaster is, to a stranger, singularly interesting. It was the first noble monument I had seen of times which, however fierce and lawless, must still be regarded as rich to overflowing in generous feeling, and as containing, in a rude state, the principles of the great social changes which have since been developed.

It is now a heterogeneous mass,—the modern additions seeming to be in fine taste, when viewed in detached parts, but having no unity, and wholly failing in correspondence with the remains of the ancient fabric. The chief of these is a gateway, protected by two towers, the battlements overhanging the base, and bearing record to the violence of an age, when lordly power felt the want of a security that is now enjoyed equally by the high and low.

"This castle, of which Edward the Third was the founder, once the seat of strength and magnificence of the dukes of Lancaster, is now crowded with felons, debtors, lunatics, and has become a workshop for convicts, an asylum for madness, a court-house, with its jury-rooms, crown and county halls, and the labyrinth of offices in which justice so often loses her way. What a monument this singular building is of the spirit and condition of past and present times! The hammer once sounded here, riveting arms,—the culprit now wields it in forging the most vulgar utensils for the cook or ploughboy. Once it set at defiance the authority of the state, and the owner measured all rights by the sword,—now the judge, with no signs of power but an enormous wig and robe, administers, we hope impartially, equal laws, to which the lives and property of all orders are subject. Once it resounded with shouts, the neigh of steeds, the clang of armour, the joyful tumult of a boundless hospitality,—now the taskmaster metes out cheerless labours to the guilty or unfortunate prisoners, and the high orders of society enter it only to break its silence with the jargon of law or the sentence of death. That was an age of wild, unrestrained action of our nature, when society was now shaken by the whirlwinds of passion, now brightened by flashes of heroic, generous feeling,—when man was a terror or a glory in his sphere,—when stronger dependencies and more relentless passions, more devoted attachments and more desolating feuds, gave society at once a more delightful and yet a more fearful interest than at present. How various is our nature! How shall we unite into one social state the virtues, principles, joys, which have marked its different stages?"

July 13th to 18th. "I am now at Pooley's Bridge, Ulles Water, and have to look back on days of activity, enjoyment, and various perceptions and sensations which can hardly be recalled. Scenes of grandeur, and wildness, and beauty have passed before my eyes and through my mind so rapidly, that

I shrink from the task of separating them. My pleasure has been greatly impaired by the state of my health, fettering me amidst most alluring objects, checking my ascent of hills, forbidding me to penetrate depths and moist places, to expose myself to the damp winds of the lakes, &c. Still I have enjoyed much.

"Saturday I spent on Windermere, a lake of great beauty, the most cheerful of this glorious company, spreading into wider expanses, seeming less desirous of privacy and solitude, and encircled with banks less high and precipitous, as if it wished greater communion with nature. It has more *beauty* than any I have seen. It is twelve miles long, and perhaps three miles in its greatest breadth; but its width generally is less, so that the opposite banks may be comprehended in one view, and their projections made to combine with the islands to give almost an infinite variety to its mild surface. Its distinguishing charm lies in its finely-marked and varied outline. Here the land gently swells into the lake, and there the water seeks a more deep repose in bays or coves which it has formed by a kindly soliciting influence from the shore. There are occasionally points of some boldness, enough to prevent tameness. But the land and water seem never to have contended for empire. Where the former advances, it is gradually, not by sharp, angular projections, but graceful curves, and it clothes itself with a richer, fresher verdure, as if to shed new glory over the lake; and when the water encroaches, you might easily imagine that it was only that it might spread a calm surface beneath the hills, to reflect more vividly their forms and hues.

"The islands are numerous, varying in size, and, to one who sails on the lake, their combinations with one another, and with the shore, open an almost endless number of channels, and form mazes of beauty which allure the eye and stimulate the imagination by partially disclosed scenery and a mysterious intricacy. These islands and the shores in general, through culture and the kindness of this moist climate, are clothed in a robe of rich verdure, and some of the former are finely wooded, so that the lovely hues of the reflected heavens and the vernal earth are blended together. In some parts the shore is almost level with the water, so that in a calm the line which severs them is lost, and the spirit of peace which breathes here seems to blend these

opposite elements into one. At other times it swells gently, and then more boldly, though I do not recollect a single fronting crag. At the northern termination, however, mountains of a wild grandeur, somewhat softened by distance, rear their heads, as if by contrast to increase the impression of the generally peaceful character of the lake. I cannot say, however, that in the elevations or hills which skirt most of the lake I saw much beauty, except as they were generally verdant. Their outlines have no peculiar grace. The lake, too, sometimes resembles a river too much.

"I did not find that the positions which commanded the widest views, and which are therefore selected as favourite spots by tourists, were always the best. Wide views seldom have that harmony on which unity of impression depends, and the mind suffers from a variety, which gives it a shock by discords of hues and forms, or at least it dissipates it too much to allow of the feeling of concentrated joy.

"The day was peculiarly favourable, and, though I sailed at noon, the prospect was not injured by a glaring or monotonous light. The clouds veiled the sky, but occasionally parted to throw gleams of lustre on island, shore, or lake; whilst a gentle intermitting breeze now drew transient, slowly-moving ripples on the surface of the water, and now left the element unbroken, as if to fulfil its office of responding in perfect harmony to the heavens. . . . .

"The effect of stations depends very much on the light, and the condition of the atmosphere. The same prospect is an entirely different thing at sunrise or sunset—under a warm or a cold sky. I feel that I have done little justice to the lakes, and the scenery round them, in my hasty view. To see a fine prospect under one light, is like looking at a countenance in a single attitude and with one expression. No wonder that many are disappointed, and that descriptions are given of this country which seem to travellers, who see it at different seasons, wholly fictitious. Beauty depends on connexion and harmony. A feature of a prospect, which, when thrown into shade or softened by mist, gives to its whole a great charm, may become a deformity, when seen through a clear atmosphere under a bright sun. I know, as yet, little of this country's powers and resources in relation to the imagination, although I have seen enough to delight me, and make me wish to spend a season here. . . . .

"Next we visited Grassmere Water, a sacred spot, a

seclusion from all that is turbulent and unholy in life. It was near sunset as we approached this water. We found ourselves descending a mount called Loughrigg into a valley, in which reposed this sweet lake, unruffled, smooth, hemmed in by sheltering mountains. The solemn heights towards the setting sun showed to us their dark sides reflected with wonderful distinctness in the still bosom of the lake, within whose waters they seemed to find even a quieter abode than in the tranquil heavens into which their tops ascended. This repetition of the dark sides of the mountains threw a solemn shade over the part of the lake to which the reflection was confined, whilst beyond this line a mild light, answering to that of the heavens, and of other mountains, gleamed from the water, investing it at one moment with various, but not inharmonious, forms of beauty.

"The effect of this lake on the spirit was immediate, deep, penetrating the inmost soul, and awakening a feeling of something profound in one's own nature. Windermere was tranquil, but it had a cheerful tranquillity. Its genius was peace, but peace with a smiling aspect, wooing society and sympathy. Grassmere seemed to be spread out in the mountain recesses as an abode for lonely, silent, pensive meditation, —for the inspired imagination, which, in still abstraction from vulgar realities, would give itself up to ideal beauty,— for the spirit of love, which, wearied with man's strifes and passions, would meet and commune with a kindred spirit in nature,—for piety to approach God without distraction, to see him in the harmony, to hear him in the silence of his creation. The character of this place is that of seclusion, but not of stern or sorrowful seclusion, congenial with the mind which injury or disappointment has made impatient or sick of the world. It invites rather the mild enthusiast, who, amidst the deformities of life, still sees what is lovely in human nature, and at a distance from the tumults of society would resign himself to visions of moral beauty, of perfect loveliness, and of sublime virtue, unknown on earth,— who is conscious of the capacities of human nature for what is good and great, and desires, under the kindliest influences of the universe, to call forth into new life these high principles in his own soul.

"On descending to this sweet lake, I felt my spirit stilled, as if I were throwing off the robe of this world's cares and passions, and escaping into a region of more than human

purity and peace, without, however, losing my human sympathies.

"The lake has not left, perhaps, very definite traces of figure, &c., on my mind, for in such a scene the mind is not stimulated to analyze. The heart and imagination are too absorbed for curious observation. It is rather circular, and wants the multiplied diversities of outline, the points, bays, recesses of Windermere, and this, perhaps, aids its effect, for the eye is not excited to wander in search of beauties half hid in mazy openings. The soul is free to receive an unmixed impression from the simple, harmonious scene. When it is said that the surrounding mountains are bold, some precipitous, and one of them a rugged steep, seamed with storms and strewed with rocky fragments, it may seem strange that the lake can have the character of mild repose which has been ascribed to it; but, spreading as it does in a circle, it so parts the surrounding mountains, that they cannot be grouped as if they bordered a narrower stream, and thus they become subordinate accompaniments to, instead of being the chief features of, the prospect. Then the immediate shore of the lake is level and verdant, and blends singularly with the peaceful water. This is particularly true with respect to the vale, properly so called, which spreads between the head of Grassmere and Helm's Crag, whose surface is almost as unbroken as the lake, and which, clothed as it is with the freshest verdure, varied by hedgerows, and combining with its natural beauty the most affecting tokens of humanity, by its simple cottages and Gothic churches, communicates an inexpressible character of peace and benignity, and of gentle and holy sweetness, to the whole scene. The mountains thus severed from one another, and rising from so peaceful a foundation, seem exalted only to guard the sacred seclusion of the lake from the profanation of worldly passions, that it may hold pure intercourse with the mild and pure sky, which it reflects so tranquilly, with the glorious sun, and the genial breezes. In such spots we can hardly help believing in a better existence than this, for we seem to have entered its confines. A faith springs up, not the less sincere or unreal because the growth of sentiment, a faith in the high purposes of our being, and our capacity of purer joys than we experience in our ordinary modes of life.

"There is a melancholy in visiting such scenes as I have

now described; but is this their direct and natural effect, or does it spring from a silent consciousness of the difference between our perturbed state and the intense quiet of soul breathed into us by such a spot? We feel Grassmere to be a shelter; but a shelter includes the idea of the storms of passion. Thus a sad sense of our actual being mingles with aspirations for a higher existence; but this sadness is so tempered and subdued by the power of the beautiful scene, that it becomes a tender, grateful, melancholy feeling. A more delicious state of heart and mind than comes from those blended emotions is, perhaps, unknown to human nature. . . . . .

"This country owes its interest chiefly to its mountains, for without these its lakes would be of little note. These are the grand features of every scene; they not only cause the valleys and masses of water, but give them their peculiar beauty, their tranquil sweetness, or their secluded solemnity. These mountains surpass all others which I have seen in expression and spirit. They are, indeed, sometimes fantastic, but seldom or never tame or heavy. Their outline is, for the most part, sweeping and graceful, though frequently broken by craggy precipices and abrupt steeps. They are not arranged in long lines, but are thrown together in a bold, irregular style, so that they combine with one another in endless variety, half concealing each other, giving imagination scope, and opening labyrinths of sweet valleys. Their sides present a diversified surface, now fine swells, and then chasms of furrows, worn by torrents and roughened by projecting rocks. All these combine to give them an air of wild grandeur; and the quiet valleys and lakes give an inexpressible charm, when seen reposing amidst and beneath these stern and rugged guardians. The calm, still water reflecting the mountains, especially when thrown into solemn shade, has singular power over the mind. Communicating as it does its own tranquil spirit to the romantic forms which it receives into its bosom, it seems to manifest a peace-breathing influence which nothing can resist. . . . . .

"I was not so deeply impressed by any mountain as by Skiddaw, which is the more remarkable, as having nothing of the wild character that I have noticed in the other mountains. Its distinction is tranquil majesty. It rises gradually and with extensive sweeps from the valley, and its outline is more flowing than that of any of its numberless associates.

Yet, so bold are the swells on its surface; its valleys, if we may so call them, open such broad expanses to the eye; its summits stretch along the horizon with such generous freedom; and it towers with an expression of such spontaneous energy, that, whilst we rest on its mildness with delight, the mind is dilated with a feeling of its grandeur. No sublimity is so real as that which makes itself deeply felt in union with beauty; just as the highest moral greatness is that which, whilst it awes by unshaken constancy of principle, at the same time attracts us by the gentleness of loev. Wild scenes, where power is manifested in desolation, act at first with great force on the mind, especially on the least refined; but power and goodness are congenial, and the highest manifestations of power are benignant. The power which reveals itself solemnly amidst beauty, by this very circumstance shows its grandeur, and acquires a more enduring sway over the soul. I found myself never wearied with Skiddaw. It lifted my spirit. Scenes of ruin are apt to subdue us; but the highest forms of sublimity exalt us, by inspiring a consciousness of kindred might. And such was the influence of this mountain. It made the lake and all surrounding objects its ministers. The mists were rolling tranquilly over its summits, partial lights were wandering across its face, and it seemed in full harmony with the noblest agents and elements of nature. . . . . .

"There is one most happy effect, which should be particularly noticed. Distance, the atmosphere, fogs, and various lights, give to the tops of mountains a visionary, sometimes a mysterious, character, better felt than described, which forms a most interesting contrast with the general massiveness of their foundations. These awful forms seem to be spiritualized as they ascend, till they blend with the pure heavens, and sometimes through the thin mist almost melt in air. This union of the firmness of earth with the ethereal brightness of the skies gives a peculiar charm to mountains. In fact, they unite remarkably opposite expressions. By their foundations they seem to sink into the earth, and our thoughts are carried to its gloomiest depths, whilst their tops aspire to heaven, and dwell in a region of peace and splendour. Whilst we are impressed by the huge bulk and weight of their inert forms, their visionary tops give them the appearance of belonging to the pure element in which they live, of possessing a congenial spirit with the free and

buoyant air, and of having risen through their own life and energy to hold communion with the sun."

We have already seen the reverent affection with which Mr. Channing regarded Wordsworth, and it will be readily understood, therefore, that he joyfully availed himself of this opportunity to seek an interview with the poet. In a letter to a sister he thus describes his visit:—

"I could not but think of the amusement I should have afforded you, could you have taken a peep at me. I had spent Sunday morning at Grassmere,—one of the sweetest and most peace-breathing spots under the skies,—and in the afternoon, being unable to attend church, I resolved to visit Mr. Wordsworth, who resides two miles and a half from the inn. Unluckily, Grassmere, whilst it supplied the wants of the imagination and heart most abundantly, could not supply me with any vehicle for the body more easy or dignified than a cart, dragged by a horse who had caught nothing of the grace of the surrounding scene.

"After an interview of great pleasure and interest, I set out to return, and, unwilling to lose Mr. Wordsworth's society, I accepted his proposition that we should walk together until I was fatigued. At the end of half a mile my strength began to fail, and finding my companion still earnest in conversation, I invited him to take a seat with me, which he did; and in this state we re-entered the delightful valley. Happily the air was mild, and I began to think that Providence, in distributing lots, had not been so severe as one might at first be inclined to feel, in limiting multitudes to such a mode of conveyance; for I enjoyed the fine prospects of Rydal and Grassmere as I could not have done in a covered carriage.

"You, perhaps, might have promised me the honour of being introduced with the cart and horse into a 'lyrical ballad.' But to me, who, as you know, profess to be greatly in debt to Mr. Wordsworth's genius, and whose respect and affection were heightened by personal intercourse, there seemed a peculiar felicity in riding through this scene of surpassing tenderness with a man of genius and sensibility, who had caught inspiration from the lakes and mountains, in whose beauty I too had been rejoicing.

"Mr. Wordsworth's conversation was free, various, animated. We talked so eagerly as often to interrupt one another. And as I descended into Grassmere near sunset, with the placid lake before me, and Wordsworth talking and

reciting poetry with a poet's spirit by my side, I felt that the combination of circumstances was such as my highest hopes could never have anticipated."

Twenty years after this sunset ride, an American traveller was visiting Wordsworth, when the poet incidentally mentioned this interview, and said that one remark then made by Dr. Channing had remained fixed in his memory, and all the more deeply from the impressive tone of sincere feeling with which it was uttered. It was to this effect,—"that one great evidence of the Divine origin of Christianity was, that it contained nothing which rendered it unadapted to a progressive state of society, that it put no checks upon the activity of the human mind, and did not compel it to tread always blindly in a beaten path."

From Wordsworth our thoughts are led by an association, which time and change can never break, to his great compeer, Coleridge, whom Mr. Channing saw while in London during the following summer. And as there is nothing in the few notes of his rapid journey through England of especial interest, we will pass at once to a brief notice of this visit. Most fortunately, we are enabled to enrich our pages with Coleridge's own record of it, as given in the following letter to Washington Allston.

"Highgate, 13th June, 1823.

"My Friend:—It was more than a gratification, it was a great comfort, to all of us, to see, sit, walk, and converse with two such dear and dearly respected friends of yours as Mr. and Mrs. Channing.

"Mr. Channing I could not be said not to have known in part before. It is enough to add, that the reality differed from my previous conception of it only by being more amiable, more discriminating, and more free from prejudices, than my experience had permitted me to anticipate. His affection for the good as the good, and his earnestness for the true as the true,—with that harmonious subordination of the latter to the former, without encroachment on the absolute worth of either,—present in him a character which, in my heart's heart, I believe to be the very rarest in earth. If you will excuse a play on words in speaking of such a man, I will say that Mr. Channing is a philosopher in both the possible renderings of the word. He has the love of wisdom and the wisdom of love.

"I was unfortunately absent the first evening. Had they been prevented from repeating their visit, I should have been vexed indeed, and yet not as much vexed as I now know I should have had reason to be. I feel convinced that the few differences in opinion between Mr. Channing and myself not only are, but would by him be found to be, apparent, not real,—the same truth seen in different relations. Perhaps I have been more absorbed in the depth of the mystery of the spiritual life, he more engrossed by the loveliness of its manifestations."

Mr. Channing had long been an admiring reader of what Coleridge had printed, and no words are needed to describe the pleasure with which, in common with all auditors, he listened to the fascinating monologue of the poet-philosopher, who had then entered upon certainly the most serene, and probably the most brilliant, period of his life. It seems, however, from the foregoing letter, that he conversed enough to leave a distinct image of himself. Out of this interview arose, at a later time, a foolish report, to which he once saw fit thus to refer. The whole matter is, indeed, quite unimportant, yet some may feel an interest to know the facts.

"I find that certain newspapers have lately circulated a letter from England, in which the writer gives some details of an interview with Mr. Coleridge, and which contains the following passage:—

"'I was not a little surprised at his [Mr. Coleridge's] remarks concerning Dr. Channing of Boston; first, that Dr. Channing's short character of Bonaparte had its birth-place and received its shape in his [Mr. Coleridge's] study.'

"I may as well say, in relation to the statement here ascribed to Mr. Coleridge, that I can explain it only by supposing the writer of the letter to have misapprehended that gentleman. I have quite a distinct recollection of my only interview with Mr. Coleridge, and cannot remember that Bonaparte was even once named. I am confident that no remarks on his character, sufficiently interesting to be brought away, were made to me; for in that case some trace of them must have remained in my mind. I am the more confident on this point, because my recollections are confirmed by a friend who was present."

From England Mr. Channing went to Paris, where he passed but a few weeks, and then, journeying leisurely through France, entered Switzerland by the Jura. He was too un-

well to avail himself freely of the rich opportunities for enjoyment so amply afforded by that most picturesque and romantic country; but a few extracts from his letters will show that bodily weakness could not deaden his spiritual energy.

Geneva, Sept. 28, 1822. "I find that I hardly knew the power of mountain scenery until I came hither, although I have not seen the noblest of the Alps, for I have not yet visited Mont Blanc, but only caught glimpses of his snowy top at a distance, half wrapt in clouds. You probably know that the mountains of Switzerland are not distinguished by beauty of form, when taken separately. The storms have dealt with them too fiercely and too long, to leave them the fine outline which I have seen in our own country and in England. Their summits generally are rugged, naked, shattered crags; and you sometimes see the perpendicular, sharp rocks towering into the skies, above the everlasting snows which rest on the projecting surfaces beneath. It is not their harmonious proportion, then, but the air of awful power impressed upon them,—the perilous precipices by which they are bounded, the boldness with which they send up to heaven their wild tops, the prodigality and confusion with which they are scattered around, and the immense glaciers shining, without apparent change or dissolution, under the summer's snow,—which subdue the traveller creeping at their foot. These constitute the deep, solemn, mysterious charm that attracts the eye to gaze upon these giant forms. . . . . .

"Do you not envy me the beautiful, magnificent scenery which is now stretching around me? I shall never forget the day I spent at Berne. It was Sunday, and in the afternoon, under a most brilliant sky, I walked on the ramparts, and hailed with joy, as old friends, the mountains in the horizon which I had visited a few days before. All that nature can do to lift us above the sordid and selfish is done in Switzerland; and who can doubt that where there is a deep purpose in the soul to elevate itself, much aid may be derived from the sublimity of the external world? But without this purpose and inward effort, it can do little for us. Switzerland has benefited my health more than any other country. The air has been exhilarating, and I have looked on the mountains with a delight which almost gave me strength to climb them. . . . . .

"It is worth no little suffering to cross the Wingern Alp, and scale the Grimsel. I had strength for neither. With

what desire did I look to the Jungfrau! If I revisit Switzerland, one of my great pleasures will be to approach its base. This country has inspired me. I grew better almost as soon as I entered it."

The winter months were passed by Mr. and Mrs. Channing at Florence, Rome, and Naples. But as his letters and journals—written in haste, debility, and, as we shall presently see, in affliction—contain no descriptions of scenery or places which are particularly note-worthy, we will proceed at once to extract from his papers some general reflections upon society, which he seems to have preserved as hints for future thought. It is scarcely necessary to suggest, that, to one of his humane spirit, men and manners, the condition of the masses of the people, the tendency of governments, the influence of institutions, presented objects of interest far surpassing all that beauty in nature and art could offer.

"Has not every state of society a spirit, a *unity?* Do not its parts cohere? Can we judge of one habit, one trait of manners, one institution alone? Must not the *system* be understood, the *central* principles, the great *ends* to which the community is working? Are not a nation's whole tone of manners and cast of institutions the workings and manifestations of some law of life, combining the whole? Must there not be a secret accordance between the different parts of a nation's character and modes of living? Is there as much of an arbitrary character in these as we are apt to imagine? Is not the interior life the great thing to be inspected, the form of human nature which is presented in the given case? . . . . .

"The art of travelling is, to unite minute observation with large comparison, with penetrating insight into the spirit of which visible modes of life are the body. The traveller should have the power of recognising the common bond, principle, spring, aim, of the infinitely multifarious agencies composing what we call a Nation. . . . . .

"We must not depend on a people to show us what is most worthy of our attention; for they are actually unconscious of what is most important, *their own spirit*, and the influences by and from which it has been formed and is kept alive. . . . . .

"A great object in travelling is to discover by comparison what is primary and universal in our nature, to separate the adventitious, secondary, temporary, to learn the deep prin-

ciples on which all permanent improvements are to rest, to behold and to love what is *human*, to shake off our prejudices in favour of the unessential modifications of our nature, and to recognise the *essential* through these modifications. . . . . .

"To go abroad that we may see the unessential,—new modes of dressing, eating, bowing, the exterior of man and life,—is a mere wasting of time. We should go to enlarge our views of human nature, to learn what it can do and suffer, to what it is equal, under what influences its powers are most developed, by what most crushed. The noblest use of travelling is, to discern more of the godlike in the human; and are there not marks, in the most degraded condition of society, of man's true glory? We may see at least some evil influences withstood, resisted, which shows an inward power not subdued, nor capable of subjection, by the most adverse circumstances. This power of seeing vital good is the true eye for a traveller. To visit distant countries only to collect mementoes of the deformities of human nature, to fill our memory with images of the misshapen exterior under which humanity lies almost hidden, is worse than useless. We should strive to perceive, beneath the distortions of our nature, its real shape, its primitive tendencies towards good. He who travels without learning to love his race more would do far better to stay at home. It is a poor business to rake into the corruptions of human nature, unless one believes in its capacity for restoration, and approaches its defilements only to cleanse them. A good man should turn from irremediable evils. To *love*, is our work. . . . . .

"The intellectual education of the poor is talked of. Can the poor, as they are now situated, be taught much? What ideas does the poor child get in a common school? The true school of human nature is the sphere opened to its faculties and affections in our conditions in daily life. A state of society furnishing to all its members a field of action for the mind and heart, gives the only true education; and is this to be looked for anywhere in outward institutions? Is it not to be found chiefly in the spirit of Christianity spread through a community, leading its members to a love and reverence of human nature, and to a regard to human excellence, in their arrangements for property, &c.? A spirit of self-sacrifice for common good must be made powerful in the most intelligent and influential. To improve men must be a chief consideration in employing them, and the good of the labourer

must be regarded, as well as the profit to be drawn from his toil. So long as this is thought romantic, society can have no bright prospect of permanent progress. . . . . .

"We are educating the poor that they may get a living, forgetting that they have a nature like our own, which cannot be confined to this end, and which, unless raised to high and generous ends, will work their own and others' misery. . . . . .

"The idea that respectability and a certain rank cohere and are inseparable, is ruinous now. The true dignity of human nature is to be learned, and the consistency of this with very moderate circumstances. . . . . .

"Civil society abounds in *restraints* on our nature, where *development* should be the great aim. How little is now done to remove barriers to human powers and affections! The order of society has been thought to demand subordination, subjection, force, artificial manners, badges of different castes,—all cramping the soul. . . . . .

"Fashion is a chain on the soul. It is a yoke laid by superiors on inferiors, through opinion. It disposes of our time, attention, powers. It puts the stamp of worth, dignity, happiness, on actions and conditions, and prevents us from judging for ourselves. Originating with those who are raised above natural wants, and in whom the spirit of self-sacrifice is lost in self-indulgence, it gives currency to factitious, selfish pursuits and enjoyments. Thus the mind is perverted, contracted, filled with false views, and grows mechanical, torpid, lifeless. A society is improved in proportion as individuals judge for themselves, and from their own experience and feeling, and not according to general opinion. A man should look to his own soul to learn what makes him happiest, and to decide when he is conscious of acting most *in harmony with his whole nature.* But how few do so! . . . . .

"Genius is a liberating power. It accords with nature, detects natural feeling in the artificial arrangements of society, and discerns and enjoys the beautiful and lovely in our natural affections and moral sentiments. Thus a literature of genius withstands corruption, brings back higher minds to nature, counteracts fashion. . . . . .

"A society is advanced in proportion as human nature is respected. It is the misery of the present state, that man, *as man,* is counted of so little worth. It is man clothed in purple, dressed in a little brief authority, high-born, rich, &c.,

who is now considered as deserving power. A just estimate of human nature, of its purposes, powers, destiny, leading to general courtesy, respect, and effort for the advancement of this nature, in each and all,—this is the measure of the progress of society. When manners, and especially the *intercourse between different classes*, express this, society is truly flourishing. . . . . .

"The existence of a large class, cut off from the rest of the community, trained up to ignorance and vice, gross in manners, in no degree acted upon by other classes, and repressed only by brute force, is a sad feature of civilized society, and a reproach on more favoured orders. The true organization of society is that in which all improvements of the higher are communicated to the lower classes, and in which intellect and virtue descend and are diffused. And will anything but Christianity, moulding anew the whole spirit of the higher classes, bring about this end? . . . . .

"The influence of government is of great importance in judging of the state of society. A good government is that which, by manifesting a common, wide, universal care, diffuses a generous, impartial, disinterested spirit. A society is well organized, whose government recognises the claims and rights of *all*, has no favourites, respects humanity in all its forms, and aims to direct the pursuits of *each to the general good*. Such a government implies the existence of a disinterested spirit in the community, and greatly strengthens it. This reaction is the most interesting view in public affairs. A society makes progress just as far as a disinterested spirit, influencing the members, is embodied and manifested in institutions, laws, tribunals, and through these flows back with new energy to individuals. This is the highest end of government, its sublime, moral end. . . . . .

"Liberty is the great social good,—exemption from unjust restraints,—freedom to act, to exert powers of usefulness. Does a government advance this simply by establishing equal *laws?* The very protection of property may crush a large mass of the community, may give the rich a monopoly in land, may take from the poor all means of action. Liberty is a blessing only by setting man's powers at large, exciting, quickening them. A poor man, in the present state of society, may be a slave, by his entire dependence. Is it not the true end of government, to aim at securing for all the widest field of useful action? This is to establish liberty.

How far more important is this than to protect any single class! . . . . .

"The poor, weak, helpless, suffering, are the first objects for the care of government. Society improves in proportion as they are protected in the exercise of their rights. These high views of government, as a sacred institution for elevating all classes of men, are essential to an exalted community. Where government is considered as a prize for selfish ambition, society becomes degraded. . . . . .

"The best condition of society is that in which all ranks, classes, orders, are intimately connected and associated. The deformity of present society is the separation of ranks, the immense disparity, the inhuman distance of different orders. All men cannot be equal in all respects; but the high should feel their elevation to be a motive and obligation to labour for inferiors.

"There must be a body of enlightened, studious men. Let not these form a party, a faction, but consider their light as a good given to be diffused, and as a means to maintain an improving intercourse among all orders. So there will be rich men; but the rich, instead of herding together, and linking themselves to one another by common pleasures, privileges, refinements, ought to regard property as a trust for the good of those who are in want. Let there be no literary *class*, no *class* of rich. The learned, when forming a distinct class, become jealous, exacting, domineering, and seek to maintain their sway, even at the expense of truth. Scholars already begin to find the benefit of quitting their pedantic cells and mingling with general society; but still they associate too much with rich and refined,—still they seek honour and power. Their high office, of being lights to society, is overlooked. How the rich injure themselves by a clannish spirit, corrupting one another by rivalry in show and expense! Christianity breaks down all these walls of division between man and man."

But the scenery, works of art, institutions, and social tendencies of the Old World could not wean Mr. Channing's affections from his home; and the following extracts from his letters manifest the tender solicitude with which he sought, while far away, to exert a good influence over his children:—

"*London*, Aug. 8, 1822. In the first place, I wish my children to be simple, natural, without affectation. Children are often injured for life by the notice taken of their move-

ments, tones, sayings, which leads them to repeat what draws attention, and to act from love of observation, instead of following the impulses of nature. A child should never be tempted to put on pretty airs, or to think of itself and its looks. I have wished my children always to act in a free, natural, unstudied way, without the idea or desire of being observed, and, on this account, have been very willing to keep them out of society, where they might have been taught, by injudicious notice, to turn their thoughts upon themselves, and to assume the manners which they would have seen to attract attention. The charm of infancy is its perfect artlessness, and the immediate communication between its feelings and actions. I would prefer that my children should have any degree of awkwardness, rather than form an artificial style of conduct; for the first evil may be outgrown, but affectation is seldom or never cured.

"The next particular to be mentioned is closely connected with this. I wish my children to be honest, sincere, and undisguised, to tell the truth at all perils and under all circumstances. I have always kept this in sight, endeavouring, in my whole intercourse with them, to avoid the slightest appearance of art or disguise. Children must *never be deceived.* For example, in order to induce them to take medicine, they must never be told that it is less bitter than it is; nor, to keep them from crying, should things which they want be slily concealed from them. It is better to let them cry than to give them a lesson in manœuvring. I am persuaded that the artifices of children, which we charge on nature, are very often imitations of the cunning practices of those about them. I would have an intercourse of entire frankness established with children. They should never have reason to suspect that there is the least disagreement between our feelings and outward signs. If we are unwilling to disclose anything, we should say so, and not use indirect means to hide it; and we should encourage them to the same explicitness. We should never invite them to express more affection than they really feel, or to lavish marks of fondness, when they wish to employ themselves about something else. It is better that they should *seem* cold than *be* insincere. Nor should they be taught, as a part of politeness, to use lightly the language of affection. Whenever they give their opinion, they should be encouraged to do it fully, freely, and not be tempted to soften or colour it because it may happen to differ

from our own or that of others. They should talk always from their own minds, and not from other people's. This transparency in children is undoubtedly sometimes unpleasant. Yet when connected, as it always should be, with the culture of the kind affections, it gradually ripens into an ingenuous, considerate frankness, which expresses the real convictions of the mind, without inflicting unnecessary pain, and becomes one of the chief beauties of our social nature.

"Children are taught insincerity in various ways; sometimes by example, sometimes by close questioning, and again by severity, by capriciousness in their superiors, by finding that their honest confessions are punished, or, at least, expose them to wearisome advice," &c.

"*Florence*, Nov. 12, 1822. I told you how earnestly I desire that my children should be simple and unaffected in character and manners, and sincere, frank, and undisguised in language and conduct. I would now add, what it is hardly necessary to say to *you*, that I wish my children to be placed under circumstances and influences most favourable for forming that kind, affectionate, benevolent, disinterested character, which our religion enjoins so continually and earnestly. Children should learn to love before they can understand the meaning of the word. They are put into our hands dependent, helpless, ignorant,—for this very end, that they may call forth love in our hearts, and that our love may awaken a corresponding sentiment in them. To nourish in them attachment and affectionate feelings should, in fact, be a leading object with us in supplying their wants, upholding their weakness, and relieving their pains.

"For this end, it is of great importance that our treatment of children should be marked by uniform kindness, unbroken by inequalities of temper. We have laboured that our children should never see in us the looks, or hear from us the sounds, of passion. I am sure that the bad feelings of infancy, which we charge upon nature, are very often to be traced to the impatience, and want of self-government, and abuse of power, in older people; and I have a strong conviction that an amiable, generous temper, uniformly expressed by those around them, will prove equally contagious.

"There is, however, a danger of a different kind to be guarded against. It is possible, by injudicious fondness, to nourish selfishness instead of love in our children. They may be so treated, as to imagine that all around them are

living chiefly for their gratification, and to expect all to be subservient to them,—a mode of treatment, perhaps, worse even than severity. To prevent this, they must see that, whilst they are loved tenderly, they are not loved blindly and without judgment; and they must see, too, that others are loved as well as themselves, and that they are expected, as they have ability, to serve and benefit those around them. They should never imagine for a moment that their own happiness is more important than that of older persons, or their rights, interests, and feelings more sacred; but they should early learn the essential equality of human beings, and the respect due to human nature in every condition. They must not acquire an idea of their own singular importance, by seeing that all arrangements refer to them, by great attention in company, or by being allowed to command others for services which they can render themselves; nor must self-will and an imperious temper be encouraged, by granting to their obstinate, importunate, loud demands, what a wise affection would not yield to their first requests. Disinterestedness, forgetfulness of self, living for others,—this is a primary end in education.

"Yet too much is not to be expected at first. Children at first are selfish,—if so hard a word may be used,—by necessity, and innocently; for their own pleasures and pains are the only ones of which they have any notion. They very slowly learn that others feel as keenly as themselves. They must, therefore, gradually have their minds turned to others' feelings, and be taught to place themselves in others' situations. Their own sufferings, instead of calling forth in their attendants an excessive tenderness, which would only make them cowardly and effeminate, should be used to produce sympathy with others in the same circumstances. In like manner, their attention should be gradually turned to disinterested actions and generous sentiments in others, which they are capable of comprehending; and they should always hear these spoken of with unaffected delight. Until, by such methods, a spirit of self-sacrifice is in some measure excited, children should not be urged to express it in action; nor should profession of it ever be required, lest their kindness become tainted with insincerity. I conclude, as I began, with saying, that the best way of teaching children love is by example. Let them see that it is common for people to live for others rather than themselves, and then they will not think that disinterestedness is a superhuman effort.

"There is another subject, closely connected with this, on which I wish to add a few lines; I mean self-government. The hardest task for children, as for ourselves, is to govern the appetites, to restrain wishes, to give up what is pleasant; and this task is to be lightened by preserving them, as far as we can, from immoderate desires. Self-restraint, which is hard at first, becomes impossible when the appetites are inflamed by studied indulgence, by a thousand delicacies and stimulants, &c. Those children are happiest, and best prepared for generous efforts, whose natural, simple wants are gratified by simple means, who are accustomed to plain food, and are left to find pleasure in the exercise of their own limbs and powers, instead of having their wishes anticipated and multiplied by misplaced kindness. Children are continually corrupted and enslaved to their appetites by bad example, by seeing older people giving great importance to pleasures of sense, and living to gratify factitious wants. In this way, they come to think a thousand superfluities essential; their wants become insatiable, and, instead of living for others, they are perpetually pursuing, with a feverish, irritable eagerness, unsubstantial pleasures for themselves."

Such was the watchful care with which he endeavoured to surround his little girl and boys with gentle and purifying influences. But one of them was never to learn on earth the riches of a parent's love. Almost while he was writing the last lines, his youngest son had died. He received the intelligence of this calamity on his arrival at Rome, and nothing could have been more beautiful than his acquiescence in this irreparable loss. The same letters which conveyed the sad tidings, announced also that a beloved sister-in-law had been taken away; and, in his reply, he thus touchingly speaks of the twofold bereavement:—

"*Rome*, Dec. 18, 1822. I reached this place yesterday, and found here the package of letters containing the melancholy accounts of W.'s loss and of my own. I am afflicted indeed. God has visited me with the heaviest loss I can experience, save one. My sweet, lovely boy! Is he indeed gone? and am I no more to see that smile which to me and to his mother was like a beam from heaven? He was a most gentle creature. I can remember his occasional cries of distress, but never one of passion. My health did not allow me to carry and play with him, as I had been in the habit of doing with my other infants; but when I was

amusing myself with Mary and William, he would creep to me and climb up into my lap, and win from me, by his benignant smile, the notice which I was giving to them. The accounts we had received of him before this last sad news were most encouraging, and we were anticipating the happy moment when we should take him to our arms and press him to our hearts with a delight he had never given us before. And he is gone! and when we return, if that blessing is in store for us, we shall look for him in vain! O, the void in a parent's heart, when a child is taken, you do not know! and may you never know it! You are a mother; and, to a mother, the pang is what a father seldom feels. I think much more of my wife than of myself, her feelings on the subject of our children have been so keen. . . . . .

"Do not think, my dear, from what I have written, that I am in danger of dejection. I suffer; but I have never forgotten that my child belonged to another and better parent, and was made for a higher state than this. I am sure that he was equally the care of God in death as in life. I cannot believe that the necessary means of educating an immortal spirit are confined to this world. I remember that comforting scripture, 'Of *such* is the kingdom of Heaven;' and my hope is, that my child has gone to live under a more intimate connexion than we can now conceive with Him who took little children into his arms and blessed them. Nor do I believe that the relation of parent and child is dissolved by death. In the whole progress of our future being, we must always, I think, look back with peculiar interest on the moment when we *began* to be, and must, I think, distinguish with some peculiar emotion those who, under Providence, brought us into life, and who welcomed and loved and cherished us in our first helplessness with intense and unwearied affection. Death is not that wide gulf between us and the departed which we are apt to imagine. . . . . Francis, Ann, my child, and our beloved Barbara, are gone from us; but are not lost to us.

"At the mention of Barbara's name, I feel as if I had been unjust in dwelling so long on my more immediate affliction. I know no greater bereavement than W.'s. I would speak of my own loss in Barbara's death, but that his so much surpasses it. She was one of the loveliest of women and best of wives. All the graces and virtues were joined in her so harmoniously, her excellence was so singularly un-

alloyed, so far from the mixtures and defects which we have to lament in most of our friends, that I dwell on her with a peculiar complacency. Seldom does a gentler, purer, more benignant, more disinterested spirit, take its flight from earth to heaven. Her countenance, conversation, life, sent forth a sweet and blessed influence. And she, too, is gone, and I am to see this lovely and beloved sister no more on earth!"

And again to his mother he thus writes, under date of January 2d, 1823:—

"Of our dear boy we had heard nothing but good, and his loss was a blow as unexpected as it was heavy. He was a treasure worth more to us than the world. His sweet, gentle temper not only made him a present blessing, but encouraged us to hope that he would need only the mildest influences to sway him to goodness, and that he would make us the happiest returns of love for our parental care. To part with this lovely, smiling, innocent boy, to whom we hoped to do so much good, and whose attachment and progress we imagined were to brighten our future lives, this is indeed to be bereaved. . . . . .

"—— expressed a fear that I should suffer in health by the sad news from home. No! even had I not the supports of Christian principle, I should find motives enough in my situation and affections for watching over my health. I feel my distance from home more deeply than ever, and have hardly a thought or a wish, as regards this world, but of returning to it; and knowing, as I do, that this depends on recovering my strength, I am almost too solicitous in using the means to this end. . . . . It is true that all the symptoms of my old maladies have not disappeared, nor will they, I apprehend, for a long time, if ever. But I trust that a life of moderate effort in my profession, together with regular exercise, will not only preserve, but gradually augment, my strength; and this hope gives me a cheerfulness and gratitude very necessary in my present circumstances. . . . .

"You and my mother Gibbs have suffered much by our late domestic trials. Our absence seems to us a great evil, by depriving us of the opportunities of rendering those offices of filial love, of which we never knew the full value until we were parents ourselves. It is our constant prayer, that God would preserve you both, and would increase our power of contributing to your happiness. Absence has endeared all our friends to us, but none more than our parents. I some-

times wonder, now, that we were capable of tearing ourselves from you all. In a world so transient and uncertain, a year seems too much time to be spent at a distance from one's home. Do give the assurances of my love to all our dear circle. I cannot begin to name the friends to whom I wish to send affectionate remembrance. I am too rich in these blessings to be able to count them, and distance only makes them more precious.

"Your affectionate son."

And, finally, in his journals, he thus communes with his own spirit and with God:—

"*Rome*, Jan. 1823. How unavailing is foresight in the most important transactions of life! We would lengthen life for our children, and they are taken before us. We lay deep plans of future usefulness, and, whilst gathering the means, we lose the beings on and for whom we would expend them. We waste the present for a future which never comes. We go to foreign countries for health, and there perhaps lay our bones, or hear of the death of those with whom we were to enjoy the health we seek. Let us not be too wise and provident, but use the means of happiness and usefulness God gives, instead of throwing them away in the pursuit of more. Exile from home, from the sphere of action marked out for us by God, is one of the greatest evils of life, and should not be encountered lightly.

"In the moment of affliction, the thought sometimes comes to us with an almost overwhelming vividness of our *entire* dependence. The hour which has taken one blessing can take more. All our possessions begin to tremble, when one very dear is taken. The loss of one child makes prominent the frailty of all. The bloom of health fades as we look upon it. O, how desolate we may be made in a moment! and how wretched would be our condition, if the Power which disposes of us were not benevolent!

"When I think of my child, of its beauty and sweetness, of the tenderness he awakened, of the spirit which God had breathed into him, and which had begun to develop itself, I cannot doubt that he was the care of God in death, as in life. He was made for God; had he lived, my chief duty would have been to direct him to that Infinite Good,—and has he not now gone to Him from whom he came? Is it not a most interesting view of death, that it removes in a

great degree the intermediate provisions, the external means by which God communicates benefits, and thus places us in a more immediate and visible connexion with him? Is it not the happiness of heaven, that spirits see God, not only as reflected in his works, but face to face? God used *our* arms to sustain our child; has he not taken him to a world where he will lean more immediately on *his own?*

"When I consider how interesting a moment the beginning of existence is to a reasonable being, how infinite the abyss between non-existence and existence, I feel that we must always look back to the moment and circumstances of our birth with peculiar emotions, and that the beings to whom, under God, we owed our life, who were the instruments of Providence in giving us bodily existence and watching over the feeble spark, who were the first to welcome and to love us, must always seem to be among our chief benefactors. Will not the parental relation thus be a bond of union, a source of happiness, for ever? The foundling sighs to know his parents with eager and burning desire. Is not this filial affection an instinct of the rational and moral nature which will act through all the future?

"Our child is lost to our sight, but not to our faith and hope,—perhaps not to our beneficent influence. Is there no means of gratifying our desire of promoting his happiness? The living and dead make one communion. 'Why born only to die?' Birth establishes a connexion with the human race. His birth made our boy one of a great spiritual family, and intimately united him with a few. Will not his eternal being be influenced by this connexion?

"We were not permitted to render the last kindnesses! There is, too, a pleasure, if it may be so called, in seeing the gradual decay and extinction of life; for we seem more easily to follow the spirit into another state, by thus bearing it company to the verge of this. There is not that sense of darkness in the gradual fading of the light as in its immediate extinction."

"Is it true, that the suggestions of affliction, the views which seem to open on the distressed spirit, are fallacious, the offspring of a diseased mind? When is the mind most diseased? In the intoxication of prosperity, or the solemn hour of adversity? When does the soul enter most deeply into itself?—when understand its true end and happiness? —when send forth the purest, highest desires? The false

splendours of this world hide the glories of a better. The light from above is seen first, perhaps, when that below grows dim. . . . . .

"The loss of a child is, indeed, one of the greatest which a mortal can experience,—the loss of an object of such tender love, of a being possessing the noblest powers, which we had hoped to see unfolding beneath our care, to whom we had longed to do more good than to any other being, and from whom we had anticipated receiving the most consoling and rejoicing returns of love. Surely the affections excited by the parental relation bear a resemblance to those by which God is united to his creatures."

How much the vivid sense of his own loss, and the depth of love thus opened in his heart towards his children, added warmth to the reverent gratitude by which he was bound to his mother, appears by the following letter.

"*Florence*, April 7, 1823. When you look at the date of my letter, you will see that I am writing you on my *birthday;* and, on this day, to whom could I write with so much reason as to you?—for to you, as well as to me, it is a memorable period. When I think of the beginning of my existence, how natural is it that my thoughts should turn to one whose kindness towards me then commenced, and who has given me through my whole life proofs of increasing love! I can hardly suppress my tears, as I feel the tender relation which my birth established between us; and now that I am so far from you, while I remember your declining years, it is consoling to me to reflect, that, amidst many deficiencies, I have not proved wholly insensible to the claims of your affection.

"On this day, I feel that I have cause to give God thanks for the blessing of existence. My life, though no exception to the common lot, though chequered with good and evil, has, on the whole, been singularly favoured. Without any care or forethought of my own, my outward condition has been almost too favourable, and the comforts of life have been multiplied upon me, not only beyond my hopes, but beyond my wishes. As to those best blessings of this world, *friends* worthy of love, I know not who has been richer than I; and as to the chief crowning good, not only of this, but of the life to come, I mean *religion*, I seem to myself to have been placed in circumstances highly favourable, at least, to the understanding of the Christian faith in its greatest

purity. How far I have practised it, with what feelings I review my conduct, and the progress of my character,—these are topics on which silence is wisdom. To another Being I have to render my account; and our poor, weak, sinful nature can hardly look back on a life as long as my own without emotions which can be fitly uttered to Him alone."

The wanderer's face was now turned again to his native land. He had faithfully sought renewed health by rest, and travel amidst interesting scenes; he had enjoyed and learned as much of good as, in his bodily and mental condition, he was capable of receiving; and now he was free to return; and he thus alludes to the deep satisfaction with which he looked forward to a reunion with his friends:—

"Need I say with what pleasure I write to you from this place? Florence is on my way *home*, and though I am still very, very far from you, the thought of making some progress towards you is an inexpressible consolation. . . . . Return seems almost too great a happiness to be anticipated. . . . . .

"I have said nothing of the feelings with which I turn towards home. My heart swells within me as I approach this subject. And why should I speak of it? Need I say where my affections cling?—how my heart yearns for the native land I have left?—how you are remembered in my prayers by night and by day?—O, no! My dear mother, once more, farewell! May your life and health be spared! May we meet again!"

On the last day of his voyage to America, he made these entries in his journal:—

"I have just seen *land*. Blessed be God! In a few hours I hope to meet my friends. What thanks are due! Let me now, on approaching shore, humbly purpose in God's strength, that I will strive to do his will more perseveringly, to be more useful, watchful, temperate, kind, devout, than ever before."

"I am returned to my friends; let me be more to them than I have yet been, more attentive, thoughtful, social, seeking their cheerfulness, interesting myself in their concerns. Especially let me be more to my mother."

The following letter to a sister will best show his feelings after his return:—

"My dear L.:—How happy I am to write to you again from my beloved home! Join with me in gratitude to our merciful Father, who has guarded me and our dear R—— by sea and land, and brought us back to you all. We did, indeed, see and feel, on our return, that we had been visited by an irreparable calamity, and for a moment our loss almost made us forget the blessings which are spared to us. But I am now awake as I never was before to their number and value. My happiness has been almost overpowering, too great to endure in a world made up of changes, and too great, I know, for the purposes of Providence towards me. My health is very much improved; and the voyage, from which I anticipated the prostration of my whole system, proved very beneficial. Among my many blessings was the good account I received of you and yours:"—

And on the Sunday after his arrival, he thus poured out the fulness of his heart.

"Those of you, my hearers, who have travelled abroad, and left far behind, and for a long time, home, friends, familiar haunts, spheres of usefulness, and employments congenial to your tastes,—you can understand the fervent gratitude which glows in my heart to-day. True, the moment of return to one's native land does not bring unmixed happiness; for too often we re-enter our long-forsaken dwellings only to miss cherished objects of affection, to see the hand of time pressing heavily on our earliest, oldest friends, to receive sad answers respecting acquaintances, to revive griefs in those who have been called to mourn in our absence, and thus to have the solemn lesson of life's changes brought with new power to our minds. Still, the moment of return after a long and distant separation is, though not without tears, most blessed. To set foot once again on our native shore, where we grew up, and where our best affections have taken root,—to re-enter the abodes where the tenderest ties were formed, and have gathered strength,—to feel ourselves once more at home, that spot over which the heart throws a light such as shines nowhere else upon earth,—to see again the countenances of friends whose forms have gone with us in memory through distant regions,—to feel the embrace of those arms on which we have leaned in our past hours of sorrow and pleasure,—to read in the eyes of those around us a love, which no kindness of strangers can ever express,—to exchange the constraints, reserves, suspicions, which can hardly be shaken

off in foreign lands, for the sweet confidence, the free and full communion, the opening of the heart, which belong to domestic life,—to know that the lives for which we have trembled, the beings in whose existence our chief earthly happiness is centred, are safe,—O, this is joy! joy such as blooms rarely in this imperfect state. To this hour of return my mind has pressed forward ever since I left you. Amid the new and glorious scenes through which God has led me, amid matchless beauties of nature and wonders of art, my own dear country has risen before me with undiminished interest and brightness. And invisible ties have reached across the ocean, growing stronger by distance, and welcoming me back to the loves, the friendships, the joys, the duties, the opportunities of home."

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